Christ's Aſcenſion
INTO
HEAVEN
ASSERTED,
AND
Practically Improved,
IN
Several SERMONS.

By the Reverend Mr. *Joſeph Hallet*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Exon.*

Whereunto is added by way of Preface ſome Account of the Pious AUTHOR.

I aſcend to my Father, and to your Father, and to my God, and your God. John 20. 17.

London: Printed for John Salusbury, and Robert Osborne Bookſeller near the *Bear* in *Exon.* 1693.

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THE

Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To that Congregation of Chriſtian People in *Exon*, that were uſually my Father's Auditors, during the publick Exerciſe of his Miniſtry in this City; and to all his Friends and Acquaintance.

DEAR SIRS,

IT is Cuſtomary with ſome Perſons, to front the Reaſons of the Publication of their Treatiſes with this: viz. *That they were induced thereto, by the preſſing Importunity of their Friends. I verily believe I may have as good a Foundation for the imploying of this Argument, to excuſe my expoſing ſome of my Father's Sermons to publick View, as moſt of thoſe that have at any time addreſſed their Readers with this Plea:*

With what Urgency many of you have been prompting me to this Undertaking, I leave you to your selves to be informed. To gratifie your desires, and in Compliance with your earnest Solicitations, I here at length present you with a few Sermons of his, that were some Years since Preached amongst you, upon the Subject of our Lord's Ascension into Heaven. *I confess, I was a long while very backward to the Publication of my Father's Discourses, because I saw the World was already cramb'd with so many Treatises on all kind of Subjects, that I almost doubted, whether amongst so great a Croud, there would be any room admitted them for Entertainment. However, I have resolv'd to send these into the World, but what acceptance they may meet with I cannot presage; only thus much I dare adventure to presume upon, that they will meet with a Cordial welcome from you. But let me leave this Caution with the Reader, that he expect not to meet in these Discourses with a Gaiety of Expression, or a pompous Rhetorick; for the Author*

never

never affected a finery of Language in his Pulpit-Diſcourſes, but always ſtudied plaineſs, that he might affect and Profit, not Amuſe his Auditors. I have often heard him ſpeak with ſomewhat of concern againſt thoſe Pulpit-Declaimers, whoſe Language diſcovered their Deſign rather to be Oſtentation, then Edification. I queſtion not but he was as able to Trim and Adorn a Diſcourſe, as moſt of thoſe that would fain have the World applaud them as mighty Orators. But he was ſatisfied, however, that might make the People admire, it was not the way to make them wiſer or better. Well, a plain Diſcourſe it is that you are here preſented with; but yet as it is not gaudy, ſo neither does it appear in ſo ſordid a Dreſs as to attract Contempt: Had my Dear Father *had the Publication of it himſelf before his Deceaſe, you may be confident it would have had ſomething more of exactneſs, then now can be ſuppoſed to attend it. For its highly improbable, that poſthumous and popular Diſcourſes (eſpecially if their Authors ne'er deſigned*

them for the Preſs) ſhould be chargeable with no Defects; when as ſome of the leaſt Compoſures of this kind have their Flaws. If you meet with any thing in the following Sermons liable to Objection, remember theſe Diſcourſes could not poſſibly have the Author's Review to render them more Correct before their Publication. And then they ſtruggle under the Diſadvantage of having been Copied from a few blotted Notes that were ſcarcely Legible: yet thus much I dare aver, that altho' the Scribe may have been guilty of ſome few miſtakes, yet not of very great ones.

But as to the Author of theſe enſuing Sermons, My endeared Father, *it may perhaps, be expected by ſome, that I ſhould give a Character of him ſuitable to his Worth, and tell the World what were thoſe commendable Qualities in him, that recommended him ſo much to the eſteem of many that knew him: I could, I confeſs, ſay many things of him, as a good Chriſtian, a Scholar, a Paſtor, and a Parent, which would diſcover him to*

have

have been a Perſon above the common Rate; but I ſhould incur the cenſure of many, ſhould I attempt any thing of that nature. Therefore all I ſhall do as to that matter, ſhall only be to remember you of ſome things concerning him, which fell within the knowledge of moſt of you. He was, altho' a Perſon of a craſie Body, yet a very painful and diligent Student, that carefully imployed his time to the beſt advantage; inſomuch, that he was not but with great difficulty, at any time drawn to recreative Diverſions. Tho' it may be, his enfeebled Body, and his ſhattered Spirits called for their frequent Repetition. He was a very faithful and affectionate Paſtor, that readily condeſcended to the meaneſt, and would Conſcientiouſly diſcharge the Duties of his Function, notwithſtanding the Frowns of the greateſt: He was as forward to reprove the Lives of thoſe of a higher Station, as the Follies of thoſe that moved in a lower Sphere: His Prayers were always fervent and pithy; his Preaching very clear but warm, and he delivered

his matter with such a winning Pathos, that he even commended the Attention of his Auditory; he filled not his Discourses with bitter Invectives against the Persons of those that differed from him in some Controverted Points, but many times spake honourably of them. His *design was not to raise mens Passions, but to allay them when exorbitant; not to Exulcerate mens Minds, but to calm and sweeten them. He Preached to instruct the Ignorant, to reclaim the Sinful, to comfort the contrite Soul; but not to fill mens Hearts with Rage, or their Mouths with Clamour. He was a Person irrecoverably averse to any thing of flattery, or a daubing Language; who always made his Tongue the Interpreter of his Heart. There are a sort of men in the World, with whom there are, as the Poet speakes,* κακαὶ φρένες, ἁδὺ λάλη ȣ̀ γὰρ ἴσον νοέει, καὶ φθέγγεται, ὡς μέλιφωνα. Moschus.

Charm-

Charming Tongues, but Hearts full of rancour and bitterneſs, whoſe Words do not keep Peace with their ſecret Intentions. *And I am ſure the Author had ſufficient reaſon to be exemped from that number; he was a fond lover of Integrity, and was obſtinately ſet againſt all Temptations to any thing of Injuſtice; inſomuch, that he has ſometimes drawn upon himſelf the diſpleaſure of his Friends, by his ſtiff adheſion to Truth and Equity. It was always his temper to value Truth and Honeſty before the Applauſes of Men, or the profuſe Commendations of miſtaken Friends.* Amicus Plato, Amicus Ariſtoteles, ſed magis Amica veritas; *He might have juſtly challenged for his* Motto: *He was a very Conſcientious and Laborious Miniſter, ſo well pleaſed with the Work his Maſter had called him to do; that his many Bodily Infirmities that very much indiſpoſed him towards the laſt of his Time, could not detain him from engaging in it. How often has it been fitter for him to have been in his Bed then in his Pulpit? His Weakneſſes*

were

were ſo very great, although his bodily Diſorders were ſometimes violent; yet then was he extreamly willing to ſpend the little remains of his Strength to inſtruct and profit you. He often adventured into the Pulpit, when his Diſtempers had exceedingly enfeebled him; ſo that ſometimes he has been ſeized by a fit of the Hipochondriack Paſſion *in the midſt of his Work, to the ſudden ſurprize of the Congregation, (for that was the Diſeaſe that attended him by frequent returns, from the Confinement in the* South-gate-Priſon *in your City, to the utmoſt Period of his Days). The laſt time that ever he was in the Pulpit, he laboured under a great deal of Weakneſs, and a viſible diſorder of Body; inſomuch, that his Legs trembled under him, which I obſerving a little before he entred the Church, entreated him to forbear Preaching for that Seaſon, and to permit me for once to ſupply his room; or that he would allow me to apply my ſelf to the Reverend Mr.* Collings *for his Aſſiſtance, who had often made a very friendly Offer of it, in caſe my*

Father's

Father's great weakneſſes ſhould at any time diſable him for his miniſterial Work. But he put me off with this Reply, that he was loath to omit that Seaſon; becauſe he was afraid he ſhould never have on opertunity of Preaching more; which was a ſad Preſage of what ſoon befel him: yet he could not be diſſwaded from doing his Maſter's Buſineſs, altho' he labour'd under ſuch great bodily Infirmities, but he aſcended the Pulpit, and entertained the Auditory with an excellent Diſcourſe from the Song of Moſes, *Deut.* 32. 1. *which Song begins thus;* Give ear, oh ye heavens, and I will ſpeak, and hear oh earth, the words of my mouth. *He deſigned ſeveral Diſcourſes upon theſe Words, but his Death prevented him. From the conſideration that* Moſes *delivered that divine Song juſt as he was about to take his final Farewel of this World; he thence obſerved this precious Truth.*

Doctrine

Doctrine 1. That gracious Souls, the nearer Heaven they are, the more Heavenly will they be.

On this Truth he had Preached ſeveral Sermons; but then farther remarking that this ſweet Song delivered by Moſes *juſt before his departure, had a manifeſt regard to the welfare of the Church of* Iſrael, *he thence obſerved this other precious Truth.*

Doct. 2. That good Men die with the Intereſt of God, and Souls much upon their Hearts. *In his laſt Sermon he moſtly inſiſted upon this Doctrine, and concluded it with this Paſſage:* Oecolampadius when he fell ſick at *Baſil*, ſent not for the Phyſician, but the Paſtors of the Churches, and notwithſtanding his Pain and Weakneſs, with much Life and Vigour, beſought them to continue conſtant and firm in the purity of that Doctrine they had profeſſed and Preached; and for other things he willed them to be leſs careful, aſſuring them, that the alſufficient God would pro-

provide for them, and not be wanting, *When thus he had ended his Diſcourſe, he concluded all with theſe ſad Words (which he ſpake feelingly, tho with a ſweet Voice)* I believe this is the laſt Sermon that ever I ſhall preach to you, or that ever you will hear from me; *Or Words to that purpoſe, which proved a truth, tho a doleful one: For no ſooner had he left the Congregation, but he inſtantly repaired to his Houſe, betook himſelf to his Bed, and from thence in a few days was carried to his Grave: A vaſt Multitude of People attended his Funeral; after his Interment the Reverend Mr.* George Troſs, *his worthy Succeſſor preach'd his Funeral Sermon to a very numerous Aſſembly, from thoſe Words,* Zech. 1. 5. Your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets do they live for ever? *From which Text the Auditory were entertain'd with many ſuitable and profitable Truths, which I wiſh may have a laſting Impreſſion upon all that heard them. My* Endeared Father, *preach'd his laſt Sermon,* March 6. 1688. *and exchanged this life for a better,* March 14 *of the ſame*

ſame Year: Thus he delivered, as it were his own Funeral Diſcourſe, then went to his home, and dyed: Thus ſuddenly was he removed not without your ſorrowful Reſentment of ſo great a Loſs; may thoſe excellent Truths that he taught you, ſtill have a room in your memories, and a happy Influence upon your Practices, and that will be the beſt way to ſecure his Name from Oblivion, and to evidence your own Names to be written in the Lambs Book of Life, Rev. 21. 27. *But before I can diſmiſs this Account of my Father, I look upon my ſelf obliged to reply to an invidious Objection, that formerly many have made a Noiſe with to leſſen his Eſteem, and procure his Diſcredit.* Viz.

Obj. Mr. *Hallet* ſaid they, was a man of very mean Abilities, that had little of a Scholar in him, for he had never the Benefit of an *Academical* Tuition, he was never graduated in any Univerſity, never had a regular, methodical Education, and therefore wondred People were ſo fond of one of ſo little Learning.

To which I anſwer, 1. *I heartily rejoyce that I could never hear any thing objected againſt his Piety.* 2. *I do moſt ſincerely wiſh that the Perſons that made a clamour with this Cavil were Poſſeſſours of a great deal more Learning than my Father was ever Maſter of.* 3. *I may further add, that I have known very many Perſons that have had an Education in our Academies, that have no great reaſon to boaſt of their acquired Abilities, or to value themſelves upon the account of their Clerkſhip: Degrees and Colledge commons, I am convinc'd do not inſpire Men with Knowledge and Learning; and I have reaſon to believe that Men may be wiſe and knowing, altho they were never nurſed up in thoſe Seminaries, for I have been acquainted with ſome that have been well skill'd in Arts and Sciences, in the learned Tongues and Languages, and yet had never the Advantage of an Accademial Inſtruction: Such have profited more by their Diligence and their own private reading, than many others by their Colledge Lectures, and their little Debates in the Schooles: I ſay this,*

not

not that I would be thought to give a diſparaging Character of an Academial Tuition, but only to prove that Learning and skill in Sciences are not always confined to Perſons thus educated; and I am ſure my Father was a plain inſtance of it. But 4. *I ſhall offer a farther Reply to this Objection in the Words of the learned and pious Mr.* Baxter, *which you may find in the Preface to his* Teacher of Houſeholds; *Speaking there of the learning that is to be met with in the Univerſities; he thus expreſſes himſelf,* If any ſay there is no great or ſolid Learning to be got elſewhere, let them think where great *Auguſtine*, and moſt of the great Lights of the Church for Four hundred Years attained their Knowledge; and whether the *Scaligers*, *Salmaſius*, *Grotius*, *Selden*, and ſuch others got not more by ſecret laborious Reading, than by Academical Tutors and Diſputes; and whether ſuch famous Men as *John Reinolds*, *Blondel*, &c. even in the Univerſities, got not their great Learning by ſearching the ſame Books which may be read in another

ther place. *This I ſuppoſe to be abundantly ſufficient to blunt the Edge of that Cavil, and to vindicate my Father's Eſteem from that Objection.*

But now to return to the following Diſcourſes, I have already told you that their Subject Matter is our Lord's Aſcenſion into Heaven ; *a Subject very proper to be diſcours'd upon to a Chriſtian Auditory, or to be propounded to the peruſal of Chriſtian Readers ; ſeeing we find it an Article inſerted in that ancient and common Creed, which uſually, (but yet how truly I cannot ſay) paſſes for an* Apoſtolical Compoſure: *This Article of our* Lord's Aſcention, *is a Truth upon which a Chriſtian's Hopes are much bottom'd, and Promiſes a Treaſury of Comfort to all the faithful followers of Jeſus ; for that our Redeemer has eſcaped the confines of the Grave, that he has glorioufly triumphed over Death and Hell by his Reſurrection and Exaltation, and that he is now in Heaven at the right Hand of his Father, interceding for his faithful People, who are got in this*

Vale of Mortality, is matter of tranſporting Joy to all that are ſanctified. This aſſures them that the great Work of Redemption is compleated, that God is reconciled, and that they themſelves ſhall at laſt be advanced to Heaven, where their glorified Head now reſides, managing their Cauſe for them, as their moſt prevalent Advocate; but I ſhall not undertake to diſcourſe on theſe Matters in this Preface; *becauſe this will be but to detain you from reading the ſame things better ſaid in the Treatiſe it ſelf, only let me obſerve that the Author in theſe Diſcourſes moſt convincingly proves that the Humane Nature of Chriſt aſcended above all aſpectable Heavens, or that Chriſt as entire Man, as to Soul and Body, was tranſlated into the bleſſed Regions above. And its ſtrange, that any that pretend to credit the inſpired Writings ſhould call this into queſtion. I nothing doubt, but that very Body of Chriſt that was crucified without the Gates of* Jeruſalem, *was the very ſame Body that was laid in the Sepulchre; and am fully ſatisfied*

that

that this ſame Body was raiſed out of the Grave, and aſcended into Heaven, and is now there at the Right Hand of God: I doubt not but the Body of Chriſt is now glorious, and is beautified with more excellent Qualities than it was veſted with, whilſt he was here in his ſtate of Humiliation; but yet this hinders not, but that this Body is ſtill the very ſame that bled, and expired upon the Curſed Tree, neither do the Sacred Scriptures tell us any thing of another Body that Chriſt has now in Heaven quite diſtinct from that which was crucified and laid in the Grave But all this while I do but detain you from reading more weighty and inſtructive matter.

Therefore to conclude, Sirs, *Remember it was the Importunity of many of you that drew theſe following Sermons into publick View; let me therefore entreat you to give them a careful and diligent peruſal, and do not throw them by into a corner a moulding (as too many deal by their Books) as if they were ſome of the*

uſeleſs

uſeleſs Lumber of your Houſes. But read them ſeriouſly, and meditate upon the Truths contained in them, with ſome Solemnity of Thought, and then you will fully anſwer the Deſign of the Publiſher; Who is,

Ex muſæo,
Nov. 26. 92.

SIRS,

Your real Friend and

Servant in the LORD.

JOSEPH HALLET. F.

OF CHRIST's Aſcenſion.

Luke XXIV. 51.

And it came to paſs while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them and carried up into Heaven.

IT was in *Paul*'s Judgment no leſs a Myſtery of Godlineſs: That Chriſt riſen from the Dead was received up into Glory, then that being come off his Glory he was manifeſted in the Fleſh, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *Without Controverſie great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, received up into Glory;*

We have formerly ſeen what of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, and Comfort for

the Godly hath appeared in the former Chriſt's Humiliation by his Incarnation. We now come indeed by the Revolution of time to ſee what of both may be found in his Exaltation by his Aſcenſion, and indeed his Aſcenſion is the ſecond degree or remove of his Exaltation, which is all Myſtery.

For ſo it pleaſed the Father, that his ſteps to his Crown ſhould be anſwerable, but oppoſite to thoſe deſcents which carried him to his Croſs.

I. He roſe from the Dead, that's oppoſed to his laying down of his Life: That is his Reſurrection is oppoſed to his Death.

II. He aſcended into Heaven, that is oppoſed to his deſcent into the Grave.

III. He ſits at the Right hand of God in oppoſition to his abode while in the State of Death. Signified by that Expreſſion he deſcended into Hell.

IV. He

IV. He shall come to judge the World. In opposition to that wretched state, in which as he stood, he was judged by the World.

'Tis the second step or degree of his Exaltation or Advancement, which we are come from the Words read to treat of at this time. *And it came to pass*, &c.

You may learn *Luke*'s Project in his Gospel, from *Luke*'s Pen in the *Acts*, for they both own him to be their Pen-man. Where in the *1st. Chap. v.* 1. He tells you that what he had done was to let you know,

1. What Christ did. 2. What he suffered. 3. What he said. 4. How he departed.

His departure from his Disciples to his Father, which he had often before inculcated to them, and prepared them for, you have described in this Text. Wherein you may take notice.

1. Of the *Place* where he ascended on Mount *Olivet*, nigh *Bethany*.

2. The *Persons* who were called forth as *Eye-witnesses* of his Ascension. His Disciples.

3. The *Manner* of taking his *Farewel*. He lift up his Hands and blessed them.

4. You have the Action of his Ascent described.

1. By his separation from his Apostles he was parted from them.

2. By his advance on high. He was carried up into Heaven. He led them out as far as to *Bethany*: *Beza* thinks that by *Bethany*, was meant the whole Tract of *Olivet*; but others with stronger probability conceive it to be a certain Village near *Jerusalem* upon *Olivet*, where the poorer sort had their dwellings, the Out-skirts of the Suburbs: And the name of the place seems to give some countenance to the Conjecture; It being that which signifies in the *Hebrew* Language, the House of Affliction,

Affliction, or the House of the Poor: *Beth Inanjah*: That is the House of the Poor. Our Saviour seem'd much delighted in this place, and most conversant amongst such Company. *Thy King cometh lowly, humble it is* Inani *poor, afflicted*: *Poor*, saith the Prophet *Zachariah* 9. 9. He came of poor Parents, to a poor People, in poor Habit, with poor Attendants. No such hurt then in a low and mean Condition in the World. If Enjoyments are but small, Temptations are the fewer. Satan hath not such advantage to play his Temptations in a low, as in a high and raised Estate in the World. And certainly that's the best Condition in which Sin can take the least advantage, and by which we are disposed to do God the greater Service. But 'tis observable that Christ makes choice of that place for his ascension, which was the place of his Agony. Thus doth Christ take the House of Affliction in his way to Heaven; And thus God in his Providence doth often bring his *Josephs* from the

Prison to the Crown, carries them through *Bethany* to *Bethel*. Through the House of the Poor to the House of God. Thus must *the Captain of our Salvation be perfect through sufferings*, saith the Author to the *Hebrews*. Heb. 2, 10. *He that descended is the same that ascended*, saith *Paul*. Heb. 4. 10. Καταβαίνει μέν, εις τὴν ἅδὶω ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἀνίσταται δὲ ὡς θεὸς :--- --- As an ancient: He descends as a Man but he ascends as God.

As Pride goes before a Fall, so often comes Advancement behind it. And so saith the wise Man: *Before Honour is Humility*, Prov. 15. 33. Self-abasings are ever antecedent to God's advancings. As God doth imploy his Wisdom to make his Children high, so it shall be in such a way as withal may make his own Name great. And therefore doth then most frequently appear to help, when his People to sight are almost past hope. He suffers the ungodly to build high, and even to touch the Heavens with their Heads. In Obad.

Obad. 4. *To set their Nests among the Stars*, that when they come tottering down, all the World may say: The Lord was above them; and for his own People he suffers them often to be reduced to *Job*'s sad Condition, to sit *Mourning on a Dunghill*, that when they are advanced and set in high places, all may see, and sing, and say the *Finger of the Lord* was there:

We must not then think it strange, nor that God wrongs us, if he bring us first to *Bethany*, and then to Glory: From the Dunghill to the Throne; for all the World is but a great Dunghill. Great Enjoyments will do us less hurt, and sad Providences when they come, will less afflict, if with Children we begin our Lesson at the Cross: Think of a Combat before a Crown, that we run our course, and so get the Prize by knowing this is not the Place of payment: We are in a World that was never intended to be our Heaven, and happy for us if we go not about to make it so. That we do not, as a Learned Man

ſaith, *Pro ſummo bono bonorum infirma amplecti:* That we chuſe not the loweſt Goods for the higheſt Good. Graſp at a Cloud inſtead of a Goddeſs, and make Vanity an Idol. He that conſiders how ſad it were to have our Heaven here, will rejoyce that he ſhall not have his Crown till he ſhall get above. Thus much for the place where he aſcended, at *Bethany* on Mount *Olivet*.

2. For the Perſons that brought him going, called to this glorious Sight. They were his Apoſtles. As you have alſo proved to your hand, in 1 *Acts*.

Which by the way, though People muſt not deifie Inſtruments, and make of Inſtruments efficient Cauſes, yet People may by this be taught to give them more Honour and Reſpect than the World will now allow them.

It was neceſſary that all the Diſciples, all that then profeſſed the Goſpel ſhould be aſcertain'd of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and of the Manner of it too. And Chriſt might have done it, by giving notice of the time, that all might have been Eye-

Eye-witneſſes of his Glory for the Confirmation of their Faith: But it muſt be all huſht, and thoſe to whom the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel was committed, muſt only be called forth to ſee, and ſo to deliver and atteſt it to the World; which was indeed a deep Contrivance: Our Wiſdom would have thought it might have been more, for the Advantage of the Goſpel, that all the living might have had a ſight of his triumphant Departure: That the Glory which he appear'd in at his departure might be as a Seal and Confirmation of thoſe Goſpel-Myſteries which he had Preached; and that the Adverſary might have ſeen it and been confounded. But it pleaſed God rather, that hereby the Miniſtry ſhould be eſtabliſhed for the Revelation of the Myſteries of the Goſpel to his People; and ſo upon ſight of his Aſcenſion they *went forth and preached*, Mark 16. 19. And in many of Chriſt's more notable Actions, you may ſtill find one of Chriſt's Eyes looking forth to the Eſtabliſhing of Miniſterial-Inſtruments,

ments, for the dispensing of his Gospel-Blessings.

When he fed his People in the Wilderness, he might with a far less Miracle have given every one his Portion with his own Hands. But his Apostles must receive from him, and the People from the Apostles, so *Ananias* must be sent to heal and restore St. *Paul* when Christ could have easily done it himself; and *Philip* must be sent to teach the Eunuch: God will have Instruments imploy'd in his Work till we come where he shall be all in all: And Christ waved the way that must have convinced all Beholders of him, purposely to establish a Ministry. And so we come to the manner of taking his Farewel. *He lift up his Hands and blessed them.*

1. Where we may observe by the way; that Christ was then nearest his highest Glory, when his Mouth was fullest of Blessings. *Whilst he blessed them he was parted from them.* A good thing to depart out of the World with

with a Bleſſing in our Mouths: That is to go as Chriſt went. Mouths accuſtomed to curſed Language, will but ill diſpoſe a Man to Divine Enjoyments. Helliſh Language makes but bad Preparation for Heaven's Glory. And as Apoſtles ſhould not only enjoy it, being only then preſent, ſo it will not be left to Chriſt only to do it. Surely when Saints are near the State and Place where all their Works ſhall be bleſſing and praiſe, they will, before they go, enter on their work: God's People are always deſirous to do good, but at their departure, when they are going to the City of the living God, then are they more abundant in gracious Deſires; And as they are breathing out their Souls they breath out Bleſſings. Thus did *Moſes* Mouth run over with Bleſſings juſt before his Death. *Deut.*33.1. *Let Reuben live and not die. Hear Lord the Voice of Judah. For Levi let thy Thumim and thy Urim be with thy Holy one. Bleſs his ſubſtance and accept the work of his hands*, &c. He ſhut up his

his Life with the ſweet Effuſion of many Benedictions upon the People of God.

The ſame was *Iſaac*'s Care and Practice when he found his Age had brought him near Death, and when Death would receive him was uncertain, he bethinks himſelf of his laſt work, to bleſs his Children before he died, and ſo order'd *Eſau* to provide for his Bleſſing before his deceaſe, *Gen.* 27. and afterward bleſſed both his Sons. The very laſt words that you hear from *Jacob*, but the ordering of his Funeral were. *The Almighty ſhall bleſs thee with Bleſſings of Heaven above, with Bleſſings of the Deep that lieth under! Bleſſings of the Breaſts and the Womb*, *Gen.* 49. He breathed out his Life with Bleſſings in his Mouth; frequently do the Sun-beams ſhine with the greateſt clearneſs and ſtrength juſt when the Sun is about to ſet, and ſo doth Grace when the Perſon is a dying. Do but read the 2 *Pet.* 1. Obſerve how Heaven ſits on *Peter*'s Lips, that every word breaths

breaths Immortality and Glory, in the Counsel he gives after (and *ver.* 14.) he had considered that shortly he must put off the Tabernacle of his Flesh. Certainly Friends, when Death is neareſt, than are all Graces moſt pregnant. Then will gracious Souls take their fill of Faith, and Repentance, and Hopes, and Prayers, and Bleſſings, and Counſels, and Reproofs; Death breaks the Box of Ointment, and then is the Houſe filled with the Smell: When St. *Paul* was to leave the *Epheſians*, and as he told them, they ſhould ſee his face no more, he Preached till Midnight, *Acts* 20. 7. and after that again he talked with them a long while, *verſ.* 11. and then he *kneeled down and prayed with them all*, verſ. 36. It was his laſt, his parting, his farewel Sermon: He was to be gone from them for ever, and ſo could not tell how to make an end, but his Soul was reſolved all into Bleſſings and Prayers, and Counſels for their good when he ſhould be gone: This was a Heavenly parting, and ſuch are the Partings

ings of God's People; Full of Bleſſings, full of Prayers, full of Encouragements, full of Counſel to thoſe they are to leave behind. Thus as Chriſt all his time taught you to live, by his departure teacheth you to die. And 'tis a brave thing to find any of our Friends to depart as Chriſt departed with much of Heaven within, inſomuch that the diſorders of Diſtempers, cannot hinder gracious Words:

2. It is worth our Obſervation too, that Chriſt when he left his People left his Bleſſing with them. He bleſſed them, and then was parted from them; like a good Parent finding the time of his departure near, calls his Friends together, prays with them, prays for them and ſo dies, and leaves them. 'Tis a comfort to a Child to receive his Father's Bleſſing, when God is ready to receive his Father's Soul. And it cannot but be an infinite Encouragement to the Faithful however times prove, to know that Chriſt left his Bleſſing to his People, when he was going to his Father:

his

his corporal Preſence gone, was no leſs, when his Bleſſing filled the room. And thus had he ſet his laſt Seal to the truth of his laſt Sermon. John 13. 1. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end*; he bleſt them as he left them. Let Men curſe them what matters that; Chriſt when he went to Heaven bleſſed them. The Apoſtles only hear it; but the Apoſtles ſhould not only enjoy it: For ſaith Chriſt, *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which believe on me through their word*, John 17. 20. So that Chriſt's Bleſſing is a common Stock to all the Church. And ſo we come to the laſt thing; The *Actio aſcenſus*: The Action of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and that is deſcribed.

1. *Disjunctione ab Apoſtolis*; In ſeparation from the Apoſtles.

2. *Surſum ſublatione*; By his being carried aloft into Heaven. Now how this was done you ſhall find the ſame *Evangeliſt* more fully to expreſs. 1 *Acts* 9. *While they beheld, he was taken up, and*

and a Cloud received him out of their ſight.

What might be ſaid of this Cloud might prove a Region too ſublime for many of your underſtandings: 'Tis the Spiritual Profit and Advantage I aim at, and not Philoſophical Speculations which ordinarily makes Mens Minds like *Jude*'s filthy Dreamers; to become Clouds without Water carried about of Winds, *Jude* 12. And therefore of this Cloud I ſhall only ſay this at preſent: That it is probable, that by this Cloud was meant the appearance of Angels; at leaſt with it a great Company of theſe Miniſters of God: So that when 'tis ſaid the *Clouds received him*, 'tis meant the *Angels* received him.

For it is ordinary in Scripture to deſcribe the appearance of *Angels* by a *Cloud*, as ſignifying a great Company, a *Cloud of Witneſſes*. and hence you find, 25 *Exod.* 22. God ſpeaks of the covering of the Ark, ſaith, *There will I meet thee, and commune with thee from betwixt the two Cherubims.* In the 16

Levit.

Levit. 2. 'tis rendred, I will *appear in the Cloud upon the Mercy-ſeat.* Sometimes a *Cloud* is in Scripture taken for God's more glorious Exhibition of his Majeſty, and of his ſpecial Protection; as that Pillar of Cloud that went before them by day; ſo that in this place without any hurt done to the Analogy of Faith, we may underſtand it of both. That Angels appeared, and that the Majeſty and Glory of the Lord did in ſome notable way diſcover it ſelf carrying up our Saviour as it were in a Triumphal Chariot to Heaven.

You ſee how fruitful this Text is of Obſervations: I ſhall only from a Declaration of Chriſt's Aſcenſion tye my ſelf to this one to be handled from the Words.

Doct. *That Chriſt after his Paſſion and Reſurrection aſcended up into Heaven.*

A Propoſition that hath in it as great a Myſtery, and as great a Mercy as any delivered in Scripture; that there-

fore it may be so to us. I shall in the handling of it,

1. Explain the Terms. 2. Prove it. 3. Give the Grounds and Reasons of it.

They are only two Terms which call for Explication, *Ascending* and *Heaven.*

The first Christ's *Ascension* will be best explained by resolving these Questions.

Quest. 1. *What is meant by Ascension?*

Sol. His Ascension is that whereby Christ by the Power of his Divinity was advanced above all Aspectable Heavens, and as compleat Conqueror over Death and Hell: Is Triumphantly sate down as a publick Person on his Throne next the Father, in order to the glorifying of himself and his People. I shall not now take this Description abroad into its parts, because the most contained in it will fall in to our

our beſt advantage in the Application.

Only this: Take notice of what I ſay, nor do I ſay it only, but the Scripture with me: That he aſcended not as a private but a publick Perſon. He aſcended not barely as the Son of God, but as a publick Perſon he aſcended as the Repreſentative of all the Elect, he aſcended as a Head. And therefore you ſhall find that after *Paul* had excellently diſcourſed of the Power of God, manifeſted in the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead and Aſcenſion into Heaven, 1 *Epheſ.* he doth. 22. *ver.* look upon Chriſt thus riſen and advanced on high, as the Head of his Church and they his Body. And afterward, *Chap.* 2. looking upon Chriſt as a publick Perſon, repreſenting his People in his Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion: Speaks of them thus intereſted in him, as thoſe who already ſit in Heavenly places, *ver.* 6. They do not ſit perſonally, but in their Repreſentative, as the People of *England* ſit in Parliament by their

repreſentative. And as the People yet unborn may be ſaid to ſin in *Adam*, becauſe he was a Perſon that ſtood up in the ſtead of all. So with as much propriety of Speech may the People of God now on the Earth be ſaid to ſit in Heavenly places, in that Chriſt who ſtands up for them, and in their names is there aſcended and ſate down.

Queſt. 2. Can Chriſt be ſaid to aſcend in both Natures or no? did he aſcend as God, if ſo his Motion overthrows his Omnipreſence. Now for anſwer hereto, you muſt know that Aſcenſion is taken two ways:

1. Figuratively in regard of *State* and *Condition*; and ſo we ſay a Man gets up or comes down, as his Eſtate and Honours grow or decline though he moves not in place.

2. It is taken properly for Local motion, a Motion from a lower to a higher place.

Now both theſe may be admitted to their place in Chriſt's Aſcenſion, though not both to both Natures.

For

For we must know, that Christ is a compound Person, a Person consisting of two Natures, the Divine and Humane.

Now then the *Divine Nature* can be only said to ascend in regard of *Condition* and *State*. When that which lay obscured and vailed in Dust and Flesh, came to have its Glory and Perfections to be manifested, and to shine forth more clearly; then is he said to ascend in his Divine Nature. So far forth as Ascension presupposes a Change, it may by no means be predicated of the Divine Nature. But there may be an Ascension in respect of manifestation, which doth not imply a change, but a more full appearance. As a bright Candle in a Lanthorn, is the same whether the Lanthorn be covered or clean wiped. And yet the Light is not alike, discovered in the one as in the other, so that the change is not at all in the Candle but in the Lanthorn.

2. The Divine Nature may be ſaid to aſcend cauſally in as much as he cauſed the Local aſcent of the Humane Nature. But now Chriſt man aſcended both in regard of *State* and *Place* too.

1. In regard of *State*; in that he received that Glory and theſe Perfections, which before he had not: For till he was aſcended his Manhead was not glorified.

2. In regard of *Place*. In that he left thoſe lower Seats of the Earth, and by the Power of his Divine Nature was carried up to thoſe Manſions which are above the Heavens.

We may learn what his Aſcenſion was by his deſcenſion: His deſcenſion was not, ſay the Schools, proper but metaphorical, in reſpect of his Divine Nature: *Non mutatione loci vel motu aliquo locali.* It was not the change of Place or Local motion, as if he were come off that glorious and holy place, that

that he might come down upon the Earth: *Sed tantum naturam humanam in terrâ non autem in cælo assumendo:* But only by assuming Humane Nature on the Earth which he had not assumed in Heaven. And so I may by parity of Reason say, that his Ascension was *humanam naturam in terrâ assumptam intra cælum recipiendo* or *transferendo.* A receiving or translating his Humane Nature assumed into Heaven to be glorified.

And so I come to the second Term, the Place to which he was advanced; to which he ascended; and that was to Heaven.

Now Scripture and Philosophy agree in the Number of Heavens; and from both we have warrant for three.

1. The *Region of the Air.*

2. The *Starry Firmament* or *Sphears,* where the Planets run their course.

3. The *higheſt Heavens* where are the Seates of the Bleſſed: The *Cælum Empyreum*: That reſplendent and glorious place, where are the bleſt Spirits made perfect. The City of the living God, the new *Jeruſalem*: Now when we ſay Chriſt aſcended into Heaven we mean, into this Heaven of Heavens above all thoſe viſible Heavens, and thoſe heavenly Manſions where God doth more fully ſhew and manifeſt his glorious Preſence and Perfection, and where his Angels and bleſt Spirits have their abode. And hence it is, that Chriſt is ſaid to be *aſcended afar above all Heavens*, Epeſ. 4. 10. To that Holy place which doth as far out-go all the other Heavens for loftineſs of Scituation, for ſtability of Duration, for dignity of Subſtance, for largeneſs of Capacity: Doth as far, I ſay out-go all other Heavens for theſe, as alſo for Glory and Bleſſedneſs; as it doth out-go all the Abilities of a Humane Underſtanding to comprehend them. Sometimes called the *Heaven*

of

of Heavens, 1 Kings 8. 27. by way of Eminency. Sometimes the *Houſe of God the Father*, John 14. 2. Sometimes the 3*d. Heaven.* So far Faith as 'tis compared with the Air and Firmament, ſtretched out and adorned with ſo many glorious Stars and Planets, 2 *Cor.* 12. 2. and *verſ.* 4. It is called *Paradice*, whereof that ancient Paradice planted in *Eden* was a Type. Sometimes 'tis called *Abraham's Boſom.* Sometimes the *new Heaven.* Sometimes the *high and holy place* ſhadowed out and often deſcribed by *Mount Sion.* Therefore called the *Holy Mount of the Lord.* Sometimes it is called a *City which hath Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God*, Heb. 11. 10. Sometimes the *Heavenly place.* Now to this high and to this heavenly place above all Heavens viſible, to thoſe immortal and unſeen Ones above, was our Saviour at his Aſcenſion carried by the infinite Vertue and Power of the Divine Nature, to ſit with the Father triumphant in higheſt Glory and Majeſty; And that

that he was so, we are now to prove.

Now this I shall make good.

1. By *Types*. 2. By *Prophesies*. 3. By *Promises*. 4. By *Witnesses*.

1. By *Types*: And hence was it as I conceive, and all the Learned I have met with: That *Enoch* before the Law was translated, and in the Body advanced from a mortal to immortal Condition, to that place where the blest Spirits remain: Till their Bodies raised by the Power of Christ's Voice, shall be prepared for such a perfect Translation. Gen. 5. 24. *And Enoch walked with God*, 'tis said, and he *was not*, *for God took him*. And that this was only an Ascension without any acquaintance, with the Grave or Corruption, the Apostle tells us, *Heb.* 11. 5. *By Faith Enoch was translated that he should not see Death.*

Another Type you have under the Law of *Eliah* specified, 2 *Kings* 2. 11. who set on fire with Zeal, for God; was sutable to his Work and Spirit carried

ried up to God in a fiery Chariot. *There appeared a Chariot of Fire, and Horses of Fire, and parted Eliah and Elisha asunder, so that Eliah went up by a Whirlewind into Heaven.*

The Chariot parted *Eliah* and his Friend *Elisha*, but not his Soul and his Body; his Soul was translated to Heaven without any smell of Death upon his upper Garment, his Body. Thus have you only heard of one before the Law; and one under the Law by an ascension translated to Heaven: The third (whereof both the other were Types) was Christ under the Gospel.

2. I prove it by *Prophesies* also: In order whereto if you please to turn to the 68 *Psalm* 18. you shall find *David* so confident of Christ's Ascension, that his Faith looks upon it as a thing already performed. *Thou hast ascended on high*: The Fashion of that Language to express the absolute certainty of things to come by a Tense that denotes the performance already past. Whence that Ex-

Expreſſion, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, though it be not accompliſhed to this day; and leaſt any ſhould miſtake the Act, he takes off all miſunderſtanding by the Effect: *Thou haſt led Captivity captive. Thou haſt received Gifts for Men.*

And that this Propheſie had an eye to Chriſt's Aſcenſion; that Chriſt's aſcenſion was the compleating of it. We are told by *Paul* in two places, *Eph.* 4. 8. Where you have an account of what Chriſt did after his Aſcenſion, in Expreſſions proportionable to the Propheſie of what he ſhould do. *When he aſcended up on high he led Captivity captive.* The other Text is, *Heb.* 4. 14. The *Pſalmiſt* had ſaid before: *Thou haſt aſcended on high.* The Apoſtle in this place ſaith: *We have a great High Prieſt that is paſt into the Heavens, Jeſus the Son of God.* Nor can I think or find leſs underſtood by that Expreſſion of the *Pſalmiſts*, *Pſalm* 110. 7. *He ſhall drink of the brook in the way, therefore he ſhall lift up his head.* That it is ſpo-

ken

ken of Chriſt all grant, and that he ſhould be advnaced at God's Right-hand, the Senſe of the whole *Pſalm* carries it. But firſt he muſt drink of the Brook by the way, of that Cup which God had put into his hands, for the taking off of his Peoples Sins and attoning the Juſtice of God, and then ſhould he lift up his head: That is, riſe from the Dead, and aſcend into Heaven.

But if this ſhall be thought too obſcure, take a further view in the Propheſie of *Daniel*, 7 Ch. 13, 14. *I ſaw in the Night Viſions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him before him, and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom that all People, Nations and Languages ſhould ſerve him: His Dominion is everlaſting, and his Kingdom that which ſhall not deſtroyed.*

This Kingdom and Dominion muſt be underſtood of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and not of his coming to Judgment, becauſe at his coming to Judgment all things

things are to be *delivered up into the hands of the Father*, 1 Cor. 15. And that it is to be understood of Christ's Ascension we may sometimes gather from the Manner of his coming to Heaven; Which saith the Prophet was in the *Clouds*; and in the 1*st. Acts*, you there find he was carried up to Heaven in the *Clouds*.

3. I prove it also from *Promises*; many whereof you have from Christ's own Mouth. Nor can I conceive less signified in that Speech of Christ's, 6 *John* 62. What, *and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before.* And in that 16 *John* 5. 7. But *now I go the way to him that sent me.* What dress soever the Words seem to appear in we know they were given as a Cordial and Support to the Disciples Spirits at Christ's departure; the Comfort and Direction of the Spirit being that which should follow upon, and so was a Promise.

4. I prove it by *Witnesses* too. You have it reported from the Mouths of those that saw it; an Eye-witness is a good Evidence: He *gathered the Eleven together*, and *while they beheld*, 'tis said, *he was taken up*, Acts 1. 9, 10. Nor did they only see it joyntly but witness it severally, so saith *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. *He is gone into Heaven.*

And after him comes *Paul* with a late, but as sure a testimony, *Eph.* 4. 10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended.* But if Men should mistake, Angels may be heard. They also are recorded as Eye-witnesses of his glorious Triumph, *Acts* 1. 10. *As he went up to two Men stood by them in white apparel; which also said this same Jesus which is taken from them into Heaven*, &c. And indeed scarce shall you find any one Point in all the Scripture proved more punctually: And no wonder. I know no Point that hath a Womb greater with Mercies. There cannot fall out a Cross, but a dull Eye may here see an excellent Com-

Comfort. Nor any Condition so mean and low, which this new State of Christ's will not sweeten, and in time change. As by God's assistance we shall shew hereafter. Be instructed how to carry your selves when the time of your Dissolution draws on.

Nay, take all in a word, *Descendit secundum naturam assumentem quæ se in carne manifestavit: Ascendit verò secundum naturam assumptam in quâ se manifestavit.* He descended according to that Nature which did assume, which manifested it self in the Flesh, but ascended according to that Nature which was assumed, in which he manifested himself.

Having

HAving thus opened and confirmed the Propoſition by Scripture: We ſhall now go on as far as Scripture will warant, to give ſome Reaſons. Why it was that Chriſt did aſcend into Heaven: Some Reaſons reſpect Chriſt, and ſome his People.

Reaſ. 1. Becauſe he had finiſhed that Work which he was ſent to do; he was ſent forth from the Father to bring about that great deſign of Heaven, Glory to God, by good will to Man: His Work done, that is God's ends accompliſhed, he had no more to do, but to go whence he came, and to manifeſt that his Work was done, by taking his place again on the Throne.

When Ambaſſadors have delivered their Maſter's pleaſure according to their Commiſſion, they return again to their Maſters Courts. And hence it is that

our Saviour ready to depart, tells his Apoſtles: That he came from the Father into the World, and having done his buſineſs, was to *leave the World and go to the Father again*, John 16. 28. and 17 *John* 4. 5. He looks upon finiſhing his Work as ſo great a reaſon of his aſcenſion to Heaven, that he makes that the only Argument to move the Father, to glorifie him with that Glory which he had once enjoyed with himſelf. *I have glorified thee on Earth; I have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me to do. And now, O Father glorifie thou me with thine own ſelf, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* He had finiſhed his Father's Work on Earth; It was now but reaſon that he ſhould go to Heaven. 'Tis obſervable that Chriſt could not recover his former Glory again, till he had done the Sinner's work; that is, he could not have the Glory again till he had opened a way for more Souls to be glorified too. Oh Grace inexpreſſible! No entring for Chriſt into Glory, till he had

had done that Work that would bring poor Souls to Glory; And can any after this doubt of God's Love!

2. He muſt aſcend; that he might manifeſt to all the World that he was God as well as Man; his Divinity muſt have lain under a Cloud and Suſpicion had he not been thus in a Cloud taken up into Heaven. Chriſt had told his Hearers of many things which were too ſublime and high for their underſtandings (that were got but little above the pitch of Nature) to aſſent to. And therefore, that by the Dignity of his Perſon, he might win a full aſſent of Faith to his Words, he makes it manifeſt that he came down from the Father, and how. Why by this in that he was to aſcend to the Father again, as you may ſee, *John* 3. 12, 13. *How ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? No Man hath aſcended up into Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven*: As if he had ſaid ye cannot believe his

Words till his Godhead is proved by his Aſcenſion. And you find *Paul* to make uſe of his Aſcenſion as an Argument to prove his Godhead by, 4 *Eph.* 9, 10. *Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the Earth, He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all Heavens that he might fill all things.* His going up to Heaven is there made by *Paul* an Argument that he came down from Heaven. That is that he was God.

3. He muſt to Heaven again, that there might be a full Requital and Recompence made him for all thoſe Sufferings, and Sorrows, and Diſhonours which he met with in the Body. It may aſtoniſh Nature to conſider what he ſuffered, and from whom. Now what kept him up in his Sufferings, but the aſſurance he had of his Reward? How did he bear what he did on Earth, but by conſidering what he ſhould be in Heaven. This is the Argument that

Paul

Paul makes uſe of to prove his Glory by, 2 *Phil.* 8. 9. *Being found in faſhion as a Man he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the death of the Croſs, wherefore ſaith he, God alſo hath highly exalted him,* &c. *Quia Chriſtus propter nos in noſtrâ carne ultrò ſeſe humiliavit: Deus ea proptus nos, in carne noſtrâ etiam in ſammam exhilit ſublimitatem.* Becaule Chriſt of himſelf for us humbled himſelf in our Fleſh: Therefore did God for us advance him to the greateſt Glory in the Fleſh. The Top and Perfection of Glory muſt be the reward of his Submiſſion, to carry on God's Purpoſes, 110 *Pſalm* 7. *He ſhall drink of the brook in the way, therefore ſhall he lift up the head.* He ſhould drink of that Cup which God ſhould put into his Hands embittered with the Wrath of God and Rage of Men. And then ſhould he liſt up his Head; yea, and there he ſhould liſt up his Head; he ſhould be advanced above the Grave by his Reſurrection, above the World by his Aſcenſion, and above all aſpect-

able Heavens, by ſitting down at the Right-hand of God. When Chriſt had been at *Bethany*, the Houſe of the Poor, then ſhould he come to *Bethel*, the Houſe of God. His Croſs muſt be his way to his Crown, he muſt wear the Crown of *Thorns* before he could put on the Crown of Glory. We ſee *Jeſus*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *For the Sufferings of Death crowned with Glory*, Heb. 2. 9.

4. That he might make it appear that his Kingdom was not of this World: His Diſciples no ſooner ſaw him delivered from the Bonds of Death, but their thoughts were preſently on a *fifth Monarchy*; a Temporal Kingdom; They began to grow Millenaries; dream of a Perſonal Reign, which Chriſt himſelf ſhould exerciſe over *Iſrael*, and deliver them from the Bondage of the *Roman* Yoke, under which they then groaned; as appears from 1 *Acts* 6. *When they therefore were come together*; that is, his Diſciples, *They asked of him, ſaying, Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the*

the Kingdom to Iſrael: And this was the Epidemical diſeaſe of the *Jews* at that time they were ſo ſenſible of their temporal Bondage, and it made them ſo impatient, that they thought it muſt be the Work of him that was the true *Meſſias* by making himſelf King to ſet them at liberty, and this and little elſe made them look after a *Meſſiah*; and this fond Conceit (becauſe they underſtood not wherein Chriſt's Kingdom did conſiſt) made Chriſt a Stumbling-block and Rock of Offence unto them, that they could not believe in him: Now Chriſt's Diſciples living amongſt them, began to be tainted with the ſame Opinion; That Chriſt by a perſonal Exerciſe of Sovereignty came to reſtore the temporal Power and Kingdom to the *Jews*. Now that they might not be ſo taken with Chriſt's bodily Preſence as to forget his Spiritual Rule and Scepter. He withdraws that from them by his Aſcenſion, and promiſes a more effuſion of his Spirit upon them, whereby their carnal Blindneſs might

be taken off, and they guided in the way of all Truth. And thus much *Paul*'s Words import, 2 *Cor.* 5. 16. *Though we have known Chriſt after the Fleſh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.* As if he had ſaid, All carnal Knowledge of Chriſt in reſpect of perſonal appearance muſt now be laid aſide he is aſcended on high. We muſt now labour to know him in a Spiritual way, ſo to know him as to believe in him, to ſubmit to him: To look for Grace by him and Heaven with him.

Theſe Reaſons I ſhall only give, as reſpecting Chriſt himſelf; There may be others drawn from that Eye which Chriſt had to the Advancement and Comfort of his People. But I ſhall wave them here and propoſe them in another place; as the bleſſed Conſequences and Effects of his the glorious Aſcenſion of Chriſt.

And now ſhall according to promiſe proceed nnto Application; and thereby improve it three ways, to Information, to Comfort, to Counſel.

1. Is

1. Is it ſo that Chriſt is locally aſcended into the higheſt Heavens; firſt Uſe for Information, and that in ſundry Particulars.

Uſe 1. Then may we here ſee the Vanity of that Popiſh Tranſubſtantiation. That real, or rather Corporal preſence of Chriſt in the Sacrament, which they with ſo much fury maintain: A carnal and corporal Preſence: For we deny not a real Preſence in a Spiritual ſence: For Chriſt is really preſent in the Sacrament, though not corporally; and it were no way improper to call it a ſenſleſs Opinion, ſince they muſt deny the Office of all the Senſes that all Men have in the World to maintain it: And though the Senſes at the time of Adminiſtration are all at a loſs in reſpect of finding any thing which may be a Confirmation to their Opinion, yet will they not endure a Spiritual Underſtanding of it: They place it under a miraculous Power, and yet no change found by any Senſe; whereas Chriſt

Christ never did Miracle, but convinced the Senses when he turned Water into Wine: They tasted Wine: So the *five Loaves*, &c. It must not be thought a Perception above Sense, though themselves cannot but deny it to be such a Perception as the Senses are not at that time capable of. But had we no other Arguments to shew the Absurdity of this Opinion than what we were holpen to in the Doctrine of Christ's Ascension it were enough. And therefore as the Angel argued from Christ's Resurrection, that he was not in the Grave, *Mat.* 28. 6. *He is not here for he is risen*; so may we argue from Christ's Ascension, that he is not in the Sacrament in that manner as the Papists dream. He is not there, that is, not corporally, for he is ascended: And to this very end doth Christ speak of his Ascension, 6 *John* 61, 62, 63. That he might there convince the Disciples of their Mistake; when they thought that Christ was carnally or corporally to be eaten.

In the 55, 57 *Verſes*, Chriſt had told his Diſciples, that his *Fleſh was meat and his blood was drink*; and ſaith Chriſt, *he that eateth me ſhall live.* Hereupon the Diſciples like the Papiſts, began to think of a Corporal eating of Chriſt's Fleſh, and were offended at it: Now Chriſt to ſatisfie them, tells them, that his meaning was ſpiritual, that they ſhould feed on him ſpiritually, and not carnally, for to eat him corporally at the Sacrament that could not be, ſaith Chriſt: And how did he prove that it could not be? Why, *Becauſe he was to aſcend to the Father:* His aſcenſion to Heaven would take off his corporal Preſence at the Sacrament. *What*, ſaith Chriſt, *if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before: It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Fleſh profiteth nothing, the Words that I ſpeak to you are Spirit*; by which Chriſt clearly ſhews, that 'tis a Spiritual eating of him in the Sacrament that he requires, and not a carnal; and that it can be underſtood of no other but a

ſpi-

ſpiritual; becauſe he is aſcended where he was before. Can Chriſt be corporally preſent at the ſame time in Heaven and on Earth too? he can't be fed on here, for he is not here, but aſcended.

2. By this Doctrine of Chriſt's Aſcenſion may we be aſſured too, that we are gainers and not loſers by the want of Chriſt's bodily Preſence: We are all like Chriſt's Diſciples, they were loath to part from him after they had enjoyed him: And we are ready to think they only were happy, who when he was in the World did enjoy him: And oh how happy had we been had we lived at that time! *My Brethren*, We ſhould be leſs happy, if we had Chriſt now upon Earth! then we can be now he is for us in Heaven: 'Tis our gain that we do not now corporally enjoy him.

The Sun could not be placed ſo much for our comfort any where upon Earth, as it is now it is ſet in the Firmament; and

and 'tis our greateſt advantage that our Sun of Righteouſneſs is placed on the Throne above all Heavens to appear before the Lord for the good of his People. Therefore when Chriſt perceived his Diſciples ſad at the news of his departure, *John* 14. 28. *If ye loved me*, ſaith Chriſt, *you would rejoyce becauſe I ſaid I go to the Father.*

'Tis a Crown of Joy ſet on our Heads, that Chriſt, who is the King, our Righteouſneſs, is ſate down with that Crown on his Head, which inſtates him in ſuch a Dominion and Riches as ſhall make for the Comfort and Advancement of his People: As we ſhall ſee more particularly anon.

3. Be we aſſured of this too; that though he be gone above us, he is not gone from us; his aſcenſion to his Father hath not taken off his relation to his People. Though he hath changed his place, he hath not loſt his affection: He is a Brother ſtill: When Chriſt was upon Earth, *go tell my brethren*, ſaith he

he, *I am to aſcend*, and after he was aſcended, he calls them *Brethren* ſtill, *Heb.* 2. 11. *Friends*, are you now aſhamed of Chriſt? Chriſt is not aſhamed of you, now he is gone to Heaven. Some Men, when they are preferr'd and got into great places, will diſown their poor Relations before great Perſonages: But Chriſt is not of this Temper, he is ſtill the ſame to thee in Heaven, that he was on Earth; thy God ſtill, thy Chriſt ſtill, thy Friend ſtill. *I aſcend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*, John 20. 17. A Conſideration that hath Sugar enough in it, to ſweeten the bittereſt Portion that can be put into thine hand.

Chriſt ſtands in the ſame Relation to thee that ever he did, and the ſame Affection; he hath not loſt his Bowels by going to Heaven. Oh, it was a Cordial that made *Job*'s bitter Cup a moſt ſweet and pleaſant Draught. I know that my Redeemer liveth *Goali*; I know that my *Kinſman* liveth ſo the *Hebrew* will

will bear, *Ruth* 4. 10. Haſt thou no Friends here, remember thou haſt a Kinſman in Heaven, that will own thee when all the World will leave thee; nay when thou muſt leave the World: Thou wert a poor deſpicable forlorn Creature; yea, but now thou art allied to the Crown. Thou art kin to the Heir apparent of Heaven; one that will never deny his Relation; one who, tho' he be gone out of thy ſight, yet thou art not out of his Mind; his Heart is ſtill with thee a peculiar People: λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, a People of Purchaſe: A Man will not loſe a Jewel that hath coſt him dear.

4. By this Doctrine of Chriſt's Aſcenſion we come to be aſſured too; that Chriſt hath finiſhed that Work which he came to do for his People. That the Purchaſe is made. Heaven purchaſed for us, our Souls for him. He our Inheritance, we his: The Work of Redemption ended, and all fully accepted; for Chriſt's Aſcenſion doth fully prove

prove that all is ſatisfied: And ſo much I underſtand by that Phraſe of Chriſt's, John 16. 10. *He ſhall convince the World of Righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father.* The Spirit of God ſhould convince his People, that all ſatisfaction was made by Chriſt in that he was gone to the Father. But you have a moſt excellent and full place to this purpoſe, 9 *Heb.* 13. *By his own blood he entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* In that he entred into Heaven, into that holy place, it was clear that the Work of Redemption was finiſhed. *When he had by himſelf purged our ſins he ſate down on the Right hand of the Majeſty on high,* ſaith *Paul, Heb.* 1. 3. Had he not fulfilled the Law, ſtruck out the ſcore, which lay in God's Debt-book charged on our Account: Had he not in all things ſatisfied his Father's pleaſure, he had never got into that holy place: But he cries τετέλεσται: It is finiſhed and the Father, *Heb.* 1. 13. xxx. ſays to him, Κάθου ſit down, as an acknow-

knowledgment he had done his Work; a very Scheme and Draught of Heaven, as it were in a few words: Chriſt is aſcended, the great Work of Redemption finiſhed. Not a Sin left now for a Believer to anſwer for, but can you believe. A Pardon purchaſed, Heaven obtained and not a peny to be paid. The Debt paid, the Book croſt. Chriſt hath done all and that he hath, we know that he is aſcended: His very aſcenſion ſhews that you have now nothing to do, but believe, ſins be many, ſins be great; But can you believe? Chriſt hath made the purchaſe, taken poſſeſſion. Thou haſt nothing to do but to walk to thine Inheritance, all thy care is but that thou do not loſe thy way. Chriſt prepares all againſt thy coming.

5. Something for thy Inſtruction thou haſt too, in theſe Circumſtances that attended this glorious Aſcenſion which are very remarkable, which

were pointed to in opening this Proposition.

1. From the place whence Christ did ascend; from *Bethany* on Mount *Olivet*, 24 *Luke* 50, 51. It was that place where Christ was taken, when *Judas* did betray him. The place of his Sufferings should be as it were the first step to his Glory; He must ascend from *Bethany*, the place where his Peace is disturb'd, his Glory begun, *Bethany*, I then told you, was a Compound in the *Hebrew* Language, made of *Beth* and *Inaniah*; and signified the *House of Affliction*, or *the House of the Poor*; very observable. The House of Affliction was the place of his Exaltation: He must go to Heaven out of the House of the Poor: And truly, *My Brethren*, *Bethany* is ordinarily the way to *Bethel*; The House of the Poor; the way to the House of God: And thus doth God often make his Peoples sufferings In-lets to Glory: Comforts are never so well relished,

reliſhed, as when they come up in the rear of Croſſes. 'Tis twice a happineſs when a Man comes to be happy after he hath been miſerable:

2. Whilſt he bleſſed them, he was parted from them: He ſang his ſweeteſt Tunes when he was neareſt his end. Whilſt he was bleſſing his Diſciples, and was ſpeaking to them, things appertaining to the Kingdom of God, he was taken away, *Acts* 1. 9. A worthy Preſedent and Pattern, for all that are drawing nigh their end to dreſs by. The Kingdom of God was in his Mouth before he had it in poſſeſſion Heaven was in him, before he was in Heaven; He was talking of God before he went to God: Thus muſt all that hope to live with him, ſpeak much of him: You muſt all die, Brethren, learn here what to do when you come to die, make your dying times, times of living Counſels. Dying words often make a notable Impreſſion on living Spirits: And

therefore when God seems to call for any of you, begin at least to speak Heaven's Language before you go: And that you may learn Heaven's Language before you come to die: That's the Reason Men are so speechless in respect of heavenly Discourse on their Sick-beds and Death-beds, because they use their Tongues so little to Matters of Heaven, in time of their Health: *David* had mostly God on his Tongue, and Heaven in his Heart when he was in Health, and hence it is that you hear of nothing else in his Mouth when he came to die; as you may see when he was about to take his farewel, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9.

3. When Christ was to depart he calls his Friends, his Family about him; *All the Eleven were with him*, Acts 1. A good Example to all Men, to call their Friends together, to give them living Counsel, when they are dying Men: It is a comfort to a Man to die amongst

amongſt his Friends; and if his advice be good, it may be their Happineſs, that he died amongſt them. Chriſt when he departed the World would have his Friends about him: And what to do, but to leave them a Copy what to do when he ſhould be gone.

And ſo I come to a ſecond way of improving this Propoſition, and that is by way of Conſolation, and truly in this one Doctrine there is ſo much lodged, that all Believers may look on this Truth, and without any cenſure of folly ſing a Requiem to their Souls. *Soul now take thy reſt, thou haſt much laid up in ſtore for many years:* Now, my Brethren, this is the Top-ſtone of all our Happineſs, which being laid all, the People of God may cry, Grace, Grace unto it: Never could Comforts have been ſolid and permanent had not Chriſt aſcended; for by this aſcenſion you heard before we enjoy a Chriſt when we do not ſee him, and he owns us though we do not ſee him: And here-

by all his other Labours, and Travels, and Sufferings are made our perfect Mercy. This finiſhed all, and this got all; his death could not have given but an imperfect ſound, had he died and ſtopt there, he had done you no good, his Reſurrection had been but half Comfort. Our Pardons had been but little worth if he had not by this act of his Aſcenſion made Proclamation of them: Nor would our Enemies have abated much of their boldneſs and triumph had not this triumph of Chriſt thrown them on their backs. *Who is he that condemns, it is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is ever at the Right-hand of God*, Rom. 8. 34. That we may have theſe cordial Pearls prepared in the Goſpel to lie by us againſt our times of faintings (which haſten on apace) let us conſider how many of them may be found: In thoſe ends which Chriſt did propound to himſelf in his Aſcenſion for his Peoples advantage.

1. Then

1. Then this was the Mark in Christ's Eye when he did ascend; he went up to Heaven that he might open and consecrate a way for us to the Throne of Grace, Christ went up to Heaven that our Prayers might come thither, a Mercy above any sum we can make. *Brethren*, Sin had thrust us out of God's Presence, and shut the doors after us: Christ now is ascended to open Heavens door again for us, and bid us welcome into God's Presence Chamber; what an unutterable Priviledge is it to have a clear Passage to Heaven in our Duties, that poor contemptible Creatures that are afraid to speak to Men may yet boldly and freely converse with God. Now that way might be made to go to God for us, that the Sluces may be broken up for God's Mercy to come down upon us, was one of Christ's ends why he did ascend, *Heb.* 10. 20, 21. *Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus: By a new and*

living way which he hath conſecrated for us, let us draw near with a true heart, &c. Our hope to be heard in Heaven is Chriſt's being in Heaven for us: What a taſte of Heaven may we find in this Point before we get thither. That we may now with boldneſs come ſince Chriſt is gone before. Oh, that Chriſt hath left us ſuch an Incouragement to wait on God in all our neceſſities, as is to be found in his Aſcenſion! We may now pray and not fear, our Mediator is gone before, our Advocate is with the Father.

Be now wholly confident that thou ſhalt be heard in that thou feareſt, weak Duties cannot hinder acceptance, when Chriſt is above to further it: When thou doſt pray thou goeſt to a God that hath thine Advocate at his Right-hand. He that is of God's Counſel is thy Counſel; This the Apoſtle thinks is enough to give a Man a bold and confident face in that holy Preſence, 4 *Heb.* 14, 16. *Seeing then that we have an High Prieſt, that*

that is paſſed into the Heavens, Jeſus the Son of God: Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace. Never fear, Chriſt is above: Who would not come boldly into the Court, when he knows he hath ſuch a Perſon to preſent his Petition. The eldeſt Son to the King is of thy ſide, what needeſt thou fear; ſome would take off Prayer from being now a Duty becauſe we live in the days of the Goſpel. Days ſay they of a high Diſpenſation, 'tis ill being too high for Duty. No, my *Brethren*, pray now if ever, for now thine Advocate is in Heaven, and therefore thou ſhouldſt now be always ſending up Petitions thither.

2. Chriſt aſcended to Heaven, that he might make a full Conqueſt over all his Peoples Enemies: And this we are told by the Author to the *Hebrews*, *Ch.* 10. 12, 13. *This man ſat down at the right hand of God expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool*; That is, till they

they are fully conquered; and in the 4 Eph. 8. *When he aſcended up on high he led Captivity captive*; That is, he led thoſe captive which had before kept his People in captivity; as we may ſee to be the meaning of the Phraſe in the 5 *Judges* 12. An alluſion to the Cuſtom of the *Romans*, who after their Victory led their Captives in triumph. So Chriſt's aſcending up to Heaven, it was his getting into his Triumphal Chariot, leading his own and his Peoples Enemies captived at his Chariot-wheels as it were; and ſo ſaith *Paul*, 2 Coloſ. 15. *Having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them*, ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παῤῥησία: —— That is, he did in height of confidence make them a publick Example of ſcorn and ſhame. 'Tis true, Chriſt ſtrook the laſt ſtroke, and won the day on his Croſs. Then the Devil and Sin, and Death received their mortal wound. But at the Reſurrection he ſeized the Prey, laid hold on thoſe he had ſubdued;

ed; and by his Aſcenſion dragged them as it were at his Chariot-wheels to be trampled upon by all thoſe that are Members of his Body; which makes the Victory of God's poor People certain. Oh what a comfort is this, my Brethren, that Chriſt by going up to Heaven doth manifeſt to all the World that all their Enemies lie bleeding at his Feet. That he hath overcome the Grave, Death, the Devil and Sin: They may bark, they can bite no more, the Serpent may put out his Sting but cannot hurt. They now lie all as Captives chained in the Stocks till the King's Pleaſure: How are we hereby armed againſt the fear of Satan: I confeſs theſe ſpiritual Powers are great in their own nature: But they are not now what they were. They are diſarmed Devils, they are Devils, but they are naked Devils, Devils they are, but wounded Devils, conquered Devils; Devils led captives; Devils in Chain; no fear of a chained Enemy if you come not within his reach.

2. Again,

2. Again, what Encouragement have we here to hold out in all our Encounters againſt theſe Enemies: They may foam but they cannot fight; they are Priſoners, Captives chained up from doing hurt: Chriſt our Lord doth hold them pinioned that they cannot ſtir, they think they may do what they pleaſe; but no more then a Goal-bird in Irons, they are held with Irons of Guilt, and in Chains of Providence; we would all ſay that that Man hath a baſe low Spirit, who when he was well appointed, and well-guarded ſhould fear a naked Enemy.

We have our Weapons with us, our Captain with us, our Enemies naked and bound: Let us be ſtrong then in the might of him that ſtrengthens us, to look upon Satan now as looſe, is to deny Chriſt's Aſcenſion. He is a Devil ſtill, but a chained Devil.

3. Here's

3. Here's an Encouragement for our Faith too; keep that eye clear, that thou mayeſt ſee thy Victory, aud thou art ſafe; there's no more required then that thou ſee thy Captain triumphing. Give Glory unto Chriſt, that he hath done this for thee, and he will apply it to thee.

Doth the Devil hold hard: Fear not, one look of Chriſt's, will make his Weapons fall out of his hands: Is Sin ſtrong? Yea, but the Sting is gone: Chriſt hath the Victory; look to thy Saviour, let but thy Faith mount into his Triumphal Chariot, and thine Enemies are all under thy feet alſo. You know 'tis a mighty Encouragement to a Souldier to fight, when he ſees his Commander go on beating down his Enemies before him. We ſhould fear our Enemies leſs, and prevail more, if we would eye Chriſt's Conqueſt more frequently; having ſuch a Friend in Heaven we need not fear any on Earth, nor Friend in Hell.

3. He

3. He ascended on high for the pouring forth of the Graces of his Spirit, that his People might also be prepared for that holy place; not only that they be secured here, but crowned above, whence saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 4. 8. *When he ascended on high he led Captivity captive, and gave Gifts unto men.* It is an allusion to the *Roman* Custom, that when the Conqueror rode in Triumph towards the Capitol or Palace, he did not only draw the Prisoners at his Chariot-wheels, but also scatter'd Money to the Spectators that saw him ride along in Triumph. Why so? Christ having by his Ascension spoiled Death and the Devil, cast his Gifts unto Men, dispenseth his Graces in a greater measure into the Hearts of his People: He hath conquered his Enemies; and now gives about his Favours to those that are his, so that strength of Grace is the Fruit of Christ's Ascension; and *Acts* 2. 33. *Being by the Right hand of God exalted;*

exalted; he hath shed forth the Holy Ghost. And therefore to comfort his Disciples at his departure; shews them, what they should get by the loss of his corporal Presence, *John* 16. 7. *It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you: But if I depart I will send him to you*: And 7 John 39. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Christ was not yet glorified*; Not that this Text, or that other, gives any countenance to that Socinian dotage; That before Christ's Ascension there were no saving Gifts of the Spirit, for that will suppose, that before Christ was there none went to Heaven, or that Holiness was not necessary to the seeing of God: But the Graces of God's Spirit were not given down in that full and abundant measure till after Christ's Ascension: The Apostles had after Christ's Ascension, as in the 2 *Acts*, a greater measure of the Holy Ghost poured down into them, they had been given to the

People

People of old. The Disciples living in the Enjoyment of Christ's corporal Presence, were so hung upon that, that they were less capable of his spiritual Presence; and therefore Christ must be gone that way might be made for this Spiritual appearance; an infinite comfort in this Age of great work and difficulties, that God's People may now go with boldness to beg greater measures of Grace, yea and expect them too, for this was the end of Christ's Ascension; That if Troubles grow and Work increase, a Soul may now expect higher and more enlarged Graces. Christ did ascend not only to give you Gifts to bring you to Heaven, but to give you Ministers enriched with eminent Abilities to fit you for Heaven, *Eph.* 4. 10. which by the way may shew Men how ill they requite the LORD when they band themselves against him. Your Graces and your Ministers were alike the Fruit of CHRIST's Ascension, that oppose

them

them is to resist the GRACE of GOD.

4. Christ ascended on high to make Intercession for his People. My Brethren, Christ got into Heaven not only to open a way for his People to pray, but that he might himself pray for his People, *Heb.* 9. 24. *He is entred into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* It was requisite that Christ should ascend into Heaven; that as he executed the Office of a Priest, by offering himself upon the Cross for us, he might also do it by appearing before God in Heaven to make Intercession for us. There is he now holding up his Blood, his Wounds to the Father, that poor Worms may be pardoned, poor Souls saved, poor Bodies raised, and then both glorified.

'Twas such a Priest we wanted, saith *Paul*, Heb. 7. 26. *Such an High Priest became us who is holy made higher then the Heaven*, which by the way doth shew us the advantage which God's Peo-

ple have by Christ's absence more then they should by his Presence, Christ could never have fulfilled the Office of his Priesthood by making Intercession for his People if he had not gone bodily into Heaven; and therefore 'tis said, *If he were on Earth he should not be a Priest.* Look on this now as an unspeakable comfort, that our Saviour is now in Heaven bodily appearing before God, making Suit and Intercession for his People, that their Sins may be pardoned, that their Prayers may be heard, that their Souls may be saved, that their Enemies may be disappointed, this was typified under the Law, in the 28 *Exod.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 29. *Aaron* the *Jewish* High Priest was to bear the Names of the Children of *Israel* in the Breast-Plate of Judgment upon his Heart, when he went into the holy Place for a Memorial before the Lord continually; and this Type was fulfilled in the Ascension of Christ; as in *Heb.* 9. 24. *Christ is entred into Heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us.* Thither he is

gone

gone with the Names of all his People, not on his Breast, but in his Heart, to make Intercession for them to his Father.

The Comforts whereof may be gathered from the two principal Parts thereof.

1. The Presentation and Tender of his own Blood to his Father, which he shed for our Sins; a Blood of so much worth and value; as God himself cannot ask more, for 'tis the Blood of him that is his fellow, that is as much as to say the value of it is infinite, not infinite only by way of price but efficacy: A Blood that dyes white, that make Sins of a Crimson and a Scarlet-dye, like Snow and Wool.

2. A making request for us: Thus did the High Priest, who was a Type of Christ enter into the holy of holiest, which was a Figure of Heaven; not only with Blood but with Incense, which did signifie his Prayers to his People;

that by both he might perform the Office of an Intercessor, *Levit.* 16. 12. What the High Priest did typically within the Vail, Christ doth now really within Heaven: And therefore *he is said to enter in by his blood into the holy place*, Heb. 9. 12. and not only so but with *his incense too*, Revel. 8. 2, 3. whereof it is said, *that much was given him*, that he should offer it with the Prayer of the Saints: Now indeed his very Blood hath an interceding Voice, and therefore it is called, *the Blood that speaketh*, Heb. 12. 24. My Brethren, all that is in Christ hath a Voice to beg his Peoples Pardon: A happy People to have such an Advocate; his Person prays, his Office prays, his Humiliation, his Exaltation, all have a Voice to beg mercy for a poor Sinner; like *Paul* for *Onesimus*: a Mediator for him, and a Sponsor for him, *Philem.* 9. 10. A Mediator *I beseech thee for Onesimus*, saith he, *and a Sponsor; if he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee any thing put it on mine account, I will repay it.* Thus is Christ

Christ both a Mediator and Surety: Hence he is called a *Mediator of a better Covenant*, Heb. 8. 6. *And a surety of a better Testament*, Heb. 7. 22. So that he doth not only pray for us but promise for us, he doth not only beg for us but engage for us. His Person, that cries for Mercy: The Nature that hath sinned suffered: His Merits that cries for mercy: The Debt which was due is satisfied: His Will that cries for mercy; *Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me; be with me where I am*, John 17. 24. Thus is Christ a compleat Intercessor: All in him intercedes, and he intercedes for all in us: For Sin to be pardoned, for Sin to be purged; for the Soul to be saved; for the Person to be glorified; hence come all our Mercies, priviledges all our Hopes for.

1. Hereby we come to be brought into a more familiar acquaintance with, and enjoyment of God himself, *I pray for these*, saith Christ: *That as thou father*

ther, art in me and I in thee, they alſo may be one in us. John 17. 21. That God and his People are as one, was the Purchaſe of his Blood, but that they are faſtened in the moſt uniting Bond of Love and Affection is the Fruit of Chriſt's Prayer.

2. Hereby we come too, to be furniſhed with all ſpiritual Graces; for our ſpiritual Employments. *I will pray the father*, ſaith Chriſt, *and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever even the Spirit of truth*, John 14. 16, 17. Every glance of God on thy Heart, every motion of his Spirit in thy Soul; every impreſſion of Grace on thy Spirit, is the Fruit of the Interceſſion of Chriſt.

3. Hereby come all our Services to be ſanctified. *The High Prieſt was to bear the Iniquity of the holy things of the Children of Iſrael*, Exod. 38. 28. So doth Chriſt: He is that *Angel who hath a golden Cenſer to offer up the Prayers*

ers of the Saints, Revel. 8. 3. And therefore God's People through Chriſt are ſaid to be made *Prieſts* to offer up their Sacrifice with acceptance upon his Altar, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. An unſpeakable Incouragement to poor timorous Souls: Who, be their Prayers as as weak, as imperfect, nay as ſinful as they may be, they have an Advocate with the Father; And art thou aſhamed of thy Prayers, art thou afraid of thy Prayers? Thou haſt one that will new draw thy Petitions, who will not preſent thy Prayers as come from thee, but as perfected and ſanctified by himſelf.

4. *Laſtly*, Hereby we come to be aſſured of God's Favour to continue with us; that our Infirmities or Miſcarriages, ſhall not be available to take off God's care of us, or care to us, whatever we have done, our Mediator is ſtill in preſence, to keep off Judgment from us, *Rom.* 8. 34. This is the Apoſtles Argument: *Who is he that con-*

demneth, it is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again; Who is even at the Right hand of God; who alſo makes interceſſion for us; who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God? As if he had ſaid, In that Chriſt is aſcended on high, he is become an Interceſſion; and in that he is an Interceſſor. We can never be ſeparated from God's Affection.

The Stability of our Condition is the Fruit of Chriſt's Interceſſion and his Interceſſion the Fruit of his Aſcenſion.

He is aſcended, therefore he intercedes; he intercedes. Therefore who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God.

That

THat was the Fourth, Christ ascended to make Intercession.

5. Christ must ascend to Heaven to prepare a place for his People. That was one end and a great one too of Christ's ascending up to Heaven: And this is the Cordial he gives his Disciples, now ready to sink at the sad News of his departure, *John* 14. 1, 2. *Let not your hearts be troubled, I go to prepare a place for you*: I go not from you to leave you but to provide for you: And therefore the Author to the *Hebrews* calls him *our forerunner*, *Heb.* 6. 20. πρόδρομος our Quarter-Master, if we may speak it with reverence: One gone before in his Triumphal Chariot to take up Quarters for his People in Heaven: Now we must know, that Christ may be said in Heaven to prepare a Place for his People three Ways.

1. By

1. By way of *Repreſentation*; as ſeating himſelf in God's Preſence in the ſtead, and as the Repreſentative of his People; for as I told you in the deſcription Chriſt is not gone to Heaven as a private and ſingle Perſon, but as a publick and common Perſon. The great Repreſentative of God's Elect:

Adam repreſented all Men in *Eden*, and ſo by his Sin all ſinned, they ſinned in their Repreſentative in their common root; and ſo Wrath came upon all: Why, ſo Chriſt in what he did in the buſineſs of Salvation, he did as repreſenting all the Elect. When he died they died, when he aroſe they aroſe; when he aſcended they did aſcend; he did all in their ſtead, as their Repreſentative and Root, all imputed to them which he did or ſuffered, all made theirs which he purchaſed. Thus when *Aaron* was to go into the holieſt of Holies, the Type of that holy place where Chriſt now ſits at the Right hand of the Majeſty on high. He is ſaid to *bear the Names*

Names of the Children of Iſrael in the Breaſt-plate of Judgment upon his Heart for a Memorial before the Lord; that is for a Remembrance that they be helped, and bleſt, and ſaved, *Exod.* 28. 29. The People muſt not go in, none but *Aaron* muſt come in and repreſent them to the Lord: So Chriſt is aſcended to that holy place, and there he hath carried the Names of the People on his Breaſt as it were, ſtands preſenting them unto God in that holy place as a People to be eſpecially regarded; and therefore he is ſaid, *Heb.* 9. 24. *To be entred into Heaven, and to appear in the Preſence of God for us*; there he ſtands in our ſteads to tranſact our buſineſs, to get the Sentence of the Law reverſed, and the Bleſſing of the Covenant to deſcend; And hence is that paſſage of the Apoſtles, *Eph.* 2. 6. *And hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly Places in Jeſus Chriſt*: We are not in heavenly Places, we are in earthly places: Yea, but we now ſit in Heaven in our repreſentative.

Our

Our Burgess is as it were there a common and a publick Person, there sits in our steads; He sits there to bring us thither; and *Heb.* 6. 20. *Thither the forerunner is for us entred*: He went not thither himself, but to take possession in our stead! As a Traveller that is sent out by his Fellows, as a Harbinger to take up Lodging in an Inn for them: Enters the Rooms not so much for himself as for his Company; and so in a Sense, when he is entred they are entred: Christ is gone the Harbinger of his Elect in their stead and behalf to Heaven; he is entred the Throne for them, and his entrance is their assurance to be there.

2. He prepares a place for his People in Heaven by *Intercession* too; and therefore is said, 9 *Heb.* 24. *Christ is not entred into the Holy place made with hands, but into Heaven: To appear in the presence of God for us continually*, praying to the Father that we be preserved here and be brought safe thither. Interceeding

terceeding that he would ſo uphold them by his Power, that they may not fall and be loſt; and ſo guide them by his Spirit, that they may be brought to that place where he is: And that his Diſciples might ſee that theſe things would be his work in Heaven in the behalf of his People; He in their Sight and Audience with much Reverence and Affection, puts it on practice a little before his departure, as *John* 17. *He lift up his eyes unto Heaven* (it is ſaid) *and ſaid Father keep through thine name theſe whom thou haſt given me that they may be one as we are one*, Verſ. 11. and 24. *Father I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am that they may behold my Glory.* So then this is the Work of Chriſt's Interceſſion; To beg God's Protection on his People on Earth and Glory with him in Heaven, that no created Power impede their Comfort, nor any Sin their Salvation.

3. Chriſt

3. Chriſt prepares his People for Heaven by way of *Operation*; he makes a Heaven within his People before they ſhall get to Heaven; he ſhall never enter Heaven that brings not ſomething of Heaven with him; he fetcheth up their Hearts, their Affections to Heaven, before he ſends for their Perſons thither. My Brethren, Never ſhall a Soul get to Heaven, that is not in Heaven before he goes out of the World: In Heaven by holy Meditations, by holy Actions, by good Thoughts, by a good Life. Chriſt never brings any Soul thither till he hath firſt prepared him here; Earth muſt be put off before Glory can be put on; and therefore in that 17 *John* 19. Chriſt ſays, *I ſanctifie my ſelf, that they alſo may be ſanctified through the Truth*: And then he cries, *Let them be glorified as I am glorified*.

GOD muſt take up the room in the Heart before the Heart ſhall find a room

room in Heaven; and there *Paul*, 1 *Col.* 12, 13, 14. Gives God thanks that he did not only provide Heaven for his People, *but made them meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; that is, prepared them for Heaven as well as prepared Heaven for them. So then when Christ prepared a place for his People in Heaven, he makes them meet for the place, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4, 5. No getting into Heaven in our old Rags. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the Dead. To an Inheritance incorruptible reſerved in the Heavens: Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation:* So then if you be kept for Heaven. Then you ſhall be made meet for Heaven; he muſt firſt put on the Robe of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs that will put on the Robe of his Glory. *Keep them from the Evil of the World*, ſaith Chriſt;

And

And what then? *Why then Father*, ſaith he, *I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me be with me*, John 17. 15, 24. And thus have you had another end of Chriſt's getting to Heaven, in order to the Comfort of his People; he went thither that he might prepare a place for his People, and prepare them for the place. Matter of moſt excellent comfort to all that have any Intereſt in him. Tis like that River in the Garden of *Eden*, which was parted into four Streams, *Gen.* 2. 10. which are as ſo many Channels full of Comfort for fainting Hearts.

1. The firſt Stream is this: Is Chriſt gone up into Heaven, why then thou mayeſt be ſure, be thine Enemies what they will, and who they will in this World, thou art ſafe. Thy Saviour is above them, and what needeſt thou fear: This *Jethro* intimates as the Reaſon of the Deſtruction of thoſe that were proud Enemies againſt God's People, *Exod.* 18. 11. *In the thing wherein they*

they dealt proudly, God was above them: That God's People were now delivered, and his Enemies under foot, was becauſe God was above them. And the *Pſalmiſt* makes God's People's Deliverance as an Inference from the High place of God's Habitation. Pſal. 97. 9, 10. *Thou Lord*, ſaith he, *art high above all the earth, thou art exalted far above all Gods.* God dwells above, as if he ſhould ſay: Well; What then? *He preſerveth the ſouls of his ſaints, he delivereth them out of the hands of the wicked.* This is God's People's *Confectio Alchermis*: A moſt excellent Cordial in their Fainting Fits. Have they potent and mighty Enemies, Men in High places? Yea: But remember thy God, thy Saviour, is above them; he is in a higher place; he that died for thee, and was laid in the Grave for thee, is got out of his dark Pit again, and is riſen above all Principalities and Powers: He that is for thee, is above thee; and what needſt thou fear?

2. Here comes another Stream of Comfort too: Is Chriſt riſen, is he got on high, and that on this Errand, to prepare a place for his People in Heaven? Here then is a warm Cloth for a cold Condition; for your Poor Ones that are in Chriſt. You that have ſcarce Houſes or Home in this World; that can ſay with Chriſt, as he did when he was in the World: *I have not where to put mine head:* no ſetled Habitation. Why, be patient a while, all Chriſt's Members will be bravely lodged e're long. He that purchaſed an Inheritance for the Saints in Light, is gone to take up Lodgings for thee. *In an inheritance incorruptible, that fades not away,* ſaith *Peter. Manſions made without hands,* ſaith Chriſt. Then thou ſhalt have a Houſe that is of too firm a Workmanſhip for a Humane Hand, and that's incorruptible. It was curiouſly made, and ſhall be curiouſly kept, *It fades not away,* 1 Peter 1.4. Some

of

of you have poor ſmoaky Houſes, ſcarce a Roof to creep in under, and in a little time none may: why for all this, if they are of Chriſt's Body, their Head will bring them into a brave Houſe ſhortly; he is gone their Harbinger into Heaven, and will get them good Lodgings.

I have read that *Valens* the *Arrian* Emperor, did threaten St. *Baſil*, one of the *Greek* Fathers, That he ſhould be ſafe neither by Sea nor by Land, from his Power. *Why*, ſaid he, *for all the Emperor's Rage, I ſhall be in Heaven, or under Heaven.* Why, ſo, though thou be driven to and fro, and haſt no abiding place of ſafety to put thy Head in; yet maugre the Malice of Men and Devils, thou ſhalt be in Heaven, or under Heaven.

After *Luther* had withdrawn himſelf from the Whoredoms of *Babylon*, I have read, that one of the Cardinal's, in a great Huff, told him, That he ſhould not have a place in all the Em-

pire to keep him. And what said *Luther?* why he smiled, and said, *If Earth cannot keep me, Heaven shall.* Why so, thou poor Soul, it may be, thou starved, thou persecuted One, bear up, Man, hast thou no abiding place on Earth, yet thou hast one provided for thee in Heaven: He that hath the keeping of that glorious House, is gone to look out a Room for you.

3. Is Christ gone to Heaven? why then here comes a third Stream out of this *Eden.* And that is, thou hast a Remedy against Death, it claps Sugar into thy Mouth against that bitter Cup, and makes the pale Enemy to smile upon thee. If thou canst lay but a well grounded Claim to an Interest in Christ, thou hast no reason to fear to die. No rather, thou hast reason to long for that hour, above all the Pleasures of the Earth: For what is Death then? 'Tis but a going to our Inhe-

Inheritance, To take actual poſſeſſion of our new purchaſed Lands, a going to the Lodgings Chriſt hath took up: Thy Chriſt is in Heaven, though he hath not taken away Death, he hath taken away the Sting of Death, and altered the Errand and Meſſage of Death. Death now ſhall but carry thee, and not ſtrike thee: 'Tis but a Trap-door to let thee into that ſtately Palace where thy Saviour is: No looking upon Death now as a grim Herald, but a welcome Meſſenger; a Meſſenger ſent of God, to guide thee, and bring thee ſafe into thy Father's Houſe; ſince Chriſt our elder Brother is in Heaven, 'tis a great ſhame now, if every good Man doth not look upon Death, as old *Jacob* did upon his Son *Joſeph*'s Waggons, come from *Ægypt*, to carry him away: Why the Spirit of the Old Man revived, as 'tis ſaid, when he ſaw them, *Gen.* 45. 27. Did *Jacob* rejoyce to ſee a Waggon, or a Chariot that would carry him into *Ægypt*, to ſee his Son *Joſeph*?

And wilt not thou rejoyce to think, that Death is a Chariot to carry thee to JESUS CHRIST, to carry thee not to *Ægypt*, but to Heaven? Not to thy Son, but to thy GOD? Death is but a Chariot to carry into Heaven, to bring us to that Eternal *Goshen* of Light, where GOD's Presence shall both make and keep us blessed for ever. And thus have you been offered a taste of Three of those Sweet Streams, which came forth of that River which runs in the *Eden* of God.

4. The Fourth and Last is this: Is Christ gone to Heaven, Thou shalt assuredly go after him: 'Tis somewhat a sad thing, when Death comes and says, You must go with me, the Body to the Grave, the Soul to God that gave it; I say, then Nature makes a sowr Face, upon such a sad Message: What my Body; that hath cost me so much! I used so tenderly! that lived so delicately! Now *to say to corruption*

ption, thou art my father ; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter ! What this Face of mine be cloathed with Clods of Duſt ! as *Job* ſays. Theſe Arms theſe Hands, theſe Feet of mine, that were my Pride, the Worms Meat ! They ſhall feed ſweetly upon them, *Job.* 24. This is a hard ſaying to Nature, and the harder to be born, when the Care hath been all imployed about the Body, and the Soul forgotten ; it will be dreadful indeed, to leave the Body in the Hands of Death, when the Soul hath been in the Power of Sin. But haſt thou the leaſt Hold-faſt on Chriſt, a Faith but like a ſmoaking Flax, thou haſt then a Cordial to give the Spirit, when thy Body is falling into the Pit. No mattter, let it fall, it ſhall up again, Chriſt is riſen, and he is gone to Heaven ; and he is gone to receive thee thither, that thou mayeſt be even where he is. So he tells you, *Joh.* 14. 19. *Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more : but you ſee me ;*

becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo. The Branches live in the Root, and if the Root lives, they will live. As if he ſaid: Well, my Friends, I muſt leave you a while; I muſt go to Heaven before you: but know this, I go to Heaven for you; and becauſe I live there bodily, aſſure your ſelves, you ſhall live there bodily too. What ſaith a Father to this? *Well*, ſaith he, *Chriſt is our Fleſh and our Bone; he is gone with our Fleſh into Heaven, our Fleſh hath taken poſſeſſion already of our Inheritance.* And this is a good aſſurance and pledge to us, that our Fleſh, theſe Bodies of ours, ſhall be in Heaven, where Chriſt is: Chriſt is gone bodily into Heaven, and becauſe he lives there, you ſhall live there alſo; Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, ſaith Chriſt. And as much you have in the 14 *Joh.* 3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, ye may be alſo.* Chriſt is gone for the preſent, but when

when all is prepared above, he will come again, and fetch his People Home to his Houſe, and to their Inheritance. Oh what an unſpeakable Comfort is this to a dying Soul! I am now ready to lie down in the Duſt, ſaith a Soul; And *though after my skin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God*, as *Job* ſaid, 19 *Job* 26. Chriſt is entred into Heaven in our Name, in our Fleſh, hath taken poſſeſſion for us of the purchaſed Inheritance, and therefore he will bring us thither in his appointed time. Chriſt hath gotten in his Head, his Body, his Church ſhall come after: CHRIST will not ſit in Heaven a HEAD without MEMBERS. It's a Scripture more worth than both the *Indies*, for a dying time.

6. The End of Chriſt's Aſcention was, that he being full of Grace and Glory, might be able to refreſh and fill the Souls of all his People: My Brethren

thren, as I told you before, Chriſt did not loſe his Bowels, his Pity, by going to Heaven. *We have not an High Prieſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: let us therefore come boldly to obtain mercy*, Heb. 4. 15, 16. No, my Brethren, our High-Prieſt hath not loſt his Feeling, by going into Heaven; he is not like a Man, that his Advancement ſhould make him forget his Friend's Good: That he might hear them, that he might help them, that he might fill them; that he might ſave them, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 4. 10. *He that deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up, far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* He aſcended with filling purpoſes, as the Sun aſcends with enlightning ſtrength. And therefore at his departure, what ſaith he, John 17. 19. *For their ſakes*, ſaith he, *ſanctifie I my ſelf, that they may be ſanctified.* And *Ver.* 22. *The glory that thou giveſt me, I have given them.* Our Glory, our Fulneſs, our Ho-

Holineſs, was one of Chriſt's Ends why he was glorified, and filled himſelf: *Of his fulneſs we all receive grace for grace*, John 1. 16. A notable Comfort to poor needy Souls.

Doſt thou ſee thy emptineſs? yea, but look on Chriſt's fulneſs; he emptied himſelf for us: Why ſo he filled himſelf for us. Doſt thou feel great want of Knowledge? thou art a poor ignorant Creature; that as *Paul* ſaid, thou doſt know nothing as thou ſhouldſt: Thou doſt want Wiſdom and Strength, and Grace, to make thee ſolid and able in thy Chriſtian Buſineſs. Thou canſt not walk as prudently as thou ſhouldeſt, in the place God hath ſet thee. Thou canſt not carry thy ſelf as beſeemingly, and as humbly as thou ſhouldeſt, when God's Hand is upon thee, thou haſt not that fear of God as thou ſhouldeſt, nor that love of God that his Mercies call for. Yet in the midſt of all, here's thy ſtay and ſupport

port: Thou knoweſt where to carry thy empty Veſſels to be filled. Thou canſt now go to thy Saviour, and ſay, Lord, thou art now in Heaven, filled with unmeaſurable Glory. Thou art a God full of Grace and Glory: Thou art full, that thy People may be full: Oh of thy Fulneſs let us receive Grace for Grace.

Such Thoughts, ſuch Meditations as theſe, will in time work us out of all our Wants. *Where I am, there alſo ſhall my ſervant be*, ſaith he, *John* 12. 26. When I ſhall be in Heaven, ne're a Servant of mine but ſhall be in Heaven too; the Servant ſhall be with the Maſter: and you know in that fore-cited place, *Epheſ.* 2. 6. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of our Aſcenſion, as a thing already effected and wrought by Chriſt's Aſcenſion: God *hath made us ſit together*, ſaith he, *in heavenly places, in Chriſt Jeſus.* Oh my dear Brethren, here's a Comfort for every Croſs: Come what can come,

come, Life or Death, Fears, Hopes, Trouble, or Peace, this will give us Confidence in all our Fears and Calamities, in all our Storms. We ſhall one Day be where our Saviour is. What a calming Support will it be, when a Soul ſhall ſay, It will be better when we ſhall be with Chriſt. The Apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. 5. 6, 7. *Therefore we are always confident*, ſaith he, *knowing that while we are preſent in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord: We are confident*, I ſay, *willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.*

And thus have you heard the Four pleaſant Streams of *Eden* come ſwimming to you, from that great River of Chriſt's End in going to Heaven, To prepare a place for his People. And thus have I finiſhed the Improvement of the Point, by way of Comfort; I now come to the laſt, and that is Counſel.

Is

Is Chriſt gone to Heaven, and is he gone for us into Heaven. Oh then let us carry our ſelves ſutably to this Mercy, and to our Hopes by it, and that in theſe particulars.

1. Is Chriſt gone to do our Work in Heaven? Oh, then let us do Chriſt's Work here on Earth. 'Tis but Reaſon and common Equity, my Brethren, that ſince Chriſt is gone upon our Buſineſs, that we have an eye unto his Buſineſs in the World. Endeavour to carry on Chriſt's Intereſt, his Kingdom in your Hearts, in your Families, in the Places where you live: Let all know you are the Servants of Chriſt, and labour all you can, to make others Servants to him; do what you can by your Prayers, by your Counſels, by your Lives, by your Examples, by your Encouragements, to propagate and enlarge the Bounds of Chriſt's Kingdom.

'Tis

'Tis the Nature of Grace to be diffuſive of her own Excellencies. Grace hath a wondrous greedy eye, it would fetch in all to Chriſt: And therefore you ſhall find, that immediately before his Aſcenſion, he ſhewed his Diſciples, that they ſhould mind his Buſineſs, when he was gone upon theirs, *Acts* 1. 8. *Ye ſhall be witneſſes to me, both in Jeruſalem, and in the uttermoſt parts of the earth.* And then how after his Aſcenſion, his Diſciples, Men and Women, and all went on in Chriſt's Buſineſs, you may ſee in the after Verſes of that Chapter. Is the Maſter of the Houſe gone, and gone for the Servants Good? Oh let them not then neglect their Maſter's Buſineſs: How would it wound thy Heart, and appale thee, if Chriſt when he meet thee, ſhould ſay, I have all this while on your Errand, been employed to make you happy; and you have done nothing for me the while: whilſt I have been providing for your Glory,

Glory, you have been diſhonouring me.

Is Chriſt gone to Heaven to prepare a place for thee? Then do thou prepare a Heart for him. It is but a grateful Recompence to give up thy Heart to him, who is gone to get Heaven for thee.

What wilt thou give him for all the Prayers and Coſt he hath been at to make thee happy? Why thou haſt nothing to give but thy Heart, and he calls for nothing elſe: *My ſon*, ſaith he, *give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. 26. Prepare a Heart for Chriſt, who hath prepared a Heaven for thee. Shall Chriſt go to Heaven, to prepare a place for thee, and thou not ſuffer him to have a corner in thy Heart: Chriſt is gone to prepare a Throne for thee, and thou let Luſt to ſit upon the Throne within thee. There is a ſweet Exhortation, 19 *Revel.* 7. Let us be glad and rejoyce,

joyce, and give Honour to him, for the *marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her self ready.* Be thou as the Bride, ready against the Wedding-day. When Christ went to Heaven, then it was the betrothing Day: But thy Marriage Day is thy Dying Day. Make thy self ready against that Day, and prepare a Heart for him, who prepares a Heaven for thee.

3. Labour to look upon him ascending with an Eye of Faith, then is some spiritual Gift likely to drop down to us, when we see our Master ascended. It is said of *Elijah*, 2 Kings 2. 10. *That if he should see his Master ascending, then he should have his spirit doubled.* Certainly 'tis no less true in this matter, if we can but by Faith see Christ ascended into Glory, his Spirit shall in some measure come upon us.

4. Thou must lean and rest thy self upon Christ for all, see him ascended

on high for thee, and so do all in his Strength and Power: However thine Hand shakes in thy Duties, know thou hast one above that will hold thy Hand: Set about nothing but with *Paul*'s Confidence, *I can do all things in Christ that strengthens me.* This Use Christ directs his Disciples to make of his Ascention, *John* 14. 3, 4, 6. *I go to prepare a place for you,* saith Christ. *Whither I go, you know, and the way you know.* We know not the Way, saith *Thomas.* No, why, *I am the way,* saith he. *No man cometh unto the Father but by me*; I ascend up to the Father for you, and you must ascend up to the Father by me; all your Doings, all your Fightings, your Works, your Wrestlings, are all to be undertaken in the Strength of Christ. *Thanks be to God,* saith *Paul, who hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Cor 15. 57.

5. 'Tis our Duty that now we serve him more affectionately, and accurately,

and faithfully than ever. He hath led Captivity captive by his aſcending on high. The World, Sin, Death, the Devil, now lie bleeding at Chriſt's Feet, yea, and through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us, at our Feet, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *He will tread down Satan under our feet*, Rom. 16. 20. What have we then to do but to ſerve the Lord.

Deliverance doth always infer Service and Obedience, being *delivered out of the hands of our enemies, let us ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our lives*, Luke 1. 74. Chriſt hath purchaſed our Obedience by Deliverance: Thus, 2 *Sam.* 7. 1. when *David* had Peace from his Enemies, he made this Uſe of it to raiſe up a Houſe for the Service of God; when the Lord had given him reſt round about from all his Enemies. *Behold*, ſaith he, *I dwell in an houſe, but the Ark of God dwells in courtains.* When God had given him Reſt,

it was not to enjoy quietly what he had, but to ſerve God with what he did enjoy: He had no ſooner Reſt, but he thought of God's Service; ſo theſe in the 9. *Acts*. They had Reſt, as it is ſaid, and walked in the fear of God. Are you freed from Enemies, you are the more free to ſerve God; obey more freely, ſince you may live more freely. This was that, when Chriſt was to aſcend, which he gives in charge to his Apoſtles to teach his People. He was now ready to aſcend, well, what was it now fit that the People ſhould know? Why that they *muſt obſerve, whatſoever Chriſt had commanded them*, 28 Matth. 20. *teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you.* Is the Maſter of the Family gone his Journey, why now then, let the Servants every one ſet to their Buſineſs, to their Service; now let it be known they are not Eye-ſervants, but do what they do in Love.

6. There

6. There is another ſpecial Duty that from Chriſt's Aſcenſion lies upon you, that is, Spiritual Joy and Rejoycing: My Brethren, Chriſt's Aſcenſion was his Triumph, and if a People be loyal, when their King triumphs they will rejoyce. Oh let our joyful Spirits give Eccho as it were to Chriſt's Trumpets, that while they ſound a Victory and Peace on Earth, we may cry glory to the Higheſt. Chriſt himſelf made this an Evidence of his Peoples Love, 14 John, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father.* Hadſt thou a poor Kinſman advanced to ſome high Place in the Commonwealth, thou wert but a poor Friend, if thou wouldſt not rejoyce: So it is our eldeſt Brother, yea, our Head is gone into Heaven, and there in our Nature, ſitteth next in Authority under God the Father, who hath put all things under him; and ſhall not we ſend one Gratulation after him? See

the Disciples Carriage when they had seen Christ ascended; a Man would have thought, that they which had so sweet Converse with Christ, should have been found in a sad and mourning Posture upon his Departure. He gone whose Life was their Light, his Words a sweet Mixture of wise Counsels, solid Comfort, precious Promises, and he departed from us: Who but would have thought he should have found his Disciples wringing their Hands and priekt at their very Hearts, since they had lost the Personal Presence of him, who was their Counsel and Support, their very Hope and Life. No such matter, they rejoyced, that he was gone, as you may see, 24 Luke 52, 53. *He was parted from them, and they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.* See my Brethren, it was the very Joy of their Hearts, that Christ was gone to Heaven, they rejoyced at it, and they continued rejoycing

joycing juſt like good Subjects when their King rides in Triumph, they cry after him, GOD ſave the KING, GOD ſave the KING, ſome ſuch Triumphant Song ſhould we ſend after our Triumphing Captain. None ſhould expreſs more Joy in Words, in Works, in Carriage, in Converſation, in Face, in Faith, than God's People. 'Tis an undecent and unbeſeeming thing, that a triumphing King ſhould have a ſad and a ſullen People. None ſhould be ſo heartily merry as Chriſtians; I do not mean toyiſh, and idle, and apiſh in their Carriage, and their Words, which to ſee in People of Age, may be the Wonder of Fools, and Laughter of Children; But in a comfortable Frame of Spirit ariſing from the Mercies they have, and the Hope they have founded on the Love of God manifeſted in Promiſes, that's Madneſs and not Mirth, which makes Fools and Children laugh, but wiſe Men mourn. Their Leader is in his Chariot on his

Throne, their Enemies at his Wheels, at their Feet, *Thanks be to God that hath given us the Victory, through Jesus Christ.*

7. *Lastly*, Is Christ gone to Heaven? why then make up after him as fast as thou canst; ascend thither Spiritually, whether Christ is ascended Corporally. Is Christ in Heaven? why then let thine Heart be in Heaven; let thine Heart be where thy Head is: let thy Desires, Thoughts, Meditations, be like the Angels on *Jacob*'s Ladder, going up, coming down, hold constant Correspondence with thy Prince. Remember, Christ thy Head is in Heaven, What hast thou to do to build Tabernacles here upon Earth? thou art Travelling to thy Country, to thy Husband. Along in the way thou art going for Jewels, do not think of taking up thy rest in thy way. Doest thou believe Christ is ascended? What dost thou scraping then in the Earth, and rooting thy self in the Mud, or turn-

tumbling with Swine in dirty Puddles of Filthy Pleasures? Observe what *Paul* saith, 3 *Colos.* 1. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek these things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* What said the Angels to those that came to seek Christ in his Sepulcher? *Luke* 24. Why, say they, *Do ye seek the living among the dead? he is not here he is risen.* So, why seek you Christ amongst the things of the Earth? he is not here, he is ascended. Christ is in Heaven, Why then *Let our conversation be in Heaven*, saith the Apostle, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Where the Carcase is, thither will the Eagles be gathered*, saith Christ, *Matth.* 24. 28. The Glory of the Gospel shall with such Effect and Power be maintained in the World, that it shall make Men as eager to come after Christ into Heaven, as the Eagle is after the Prey. See then how you can find the Power of Christ's Ascension growing upon your Hearts? Whether it draws thee up to Christ, makes thee most Earthly

and

and more Heavenly? Whether it makes thee more Passionately eager, and more Importunately earnest after Christ in his Ordinances, in his Presence, in his Grace, in his Members? This is thy Duty, and this, if it be thy Work, will be thy Happiness. What, all for Earth, and Christ in Heaven? Let thy Thoughts then be more working to Christ, thy Words more Talking of Christ, thy Life more guided by Christ, thy Affection more with the People of Christ. Thy Head is in Heaven, Let thy Heart be in Heaven and then doubt not but thy Body will come after.

FINIS.

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